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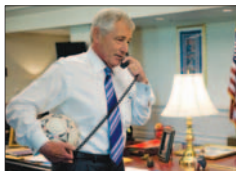
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Free to Deployed Areas

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Glitches plague VA burn-pit site

Agency's airborne hazards registry confounds veterans

By KELLY KENNEDY
USA Today

WASHINGTON — Veterans Affairs officials this week took down then relaunched a balky new website for veterans who may have been exposed to waste burn pits, but some veterans say they still can't sign up.

Some bases in Iraq and Afghanistan burned as much as 240 tons of trash a day in an open pit. The site allows anyone who believes he or she was



Stars and Stripes

Burn pits like this one at Balad Air Base, Iraq, may have led to health problems for servicemembers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

exposed to fumes from trash burned in those pits, or to other toxins—such as metal, bacteria or particulate matter, inhaled

with the dust—to register that exposure with the VA.

Spc. Andrea Neutzling, a former Army reservist who

served at Camp Bucca, Iraq, as a military intelligence specialist in 2005 and 2006, said she spent at least one day a month in the camp's burn pit burning papers.

"I got to see firsthand what all was dumped into our camp pit," Neutzling said. "I started having breathing issues my first winter back from Iraq."

While Neutzling was able to register after an hour spent on the new site, she said she could not fix incorrect data about the dates she was in the military.

"Trying to register takes a long time, and the page crashes all the time," Richard Gutierrez posted on the Wounded Warrior Project's Facebook page Friday.

SEE GLITCHES ON PAGE 4

—FORMER AIRMAN— SOARS TO THE TOP OF GERMAN COUNTRY MUSIC SCENE

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany—Even as he traveled the world working in one of the Air Force's most dangerous careers, James Bailey pursued his passion for music in the little down time that came with life as an explosive ordnance disposal technician.

While stationed in Germany from 2002 to 2005, Bailey produced albums for several American musicians and played in at least three rock bands.

In those days, Bailey never expected to trade in his bomb suit for cowboy boots and find success as the vocalist of a German country music band.

ONLINE: Official NightHawk website: nighthawkband.de
Now a civilian, Bailey joined NightHawk two years ago after answering the band's online ad for a lead singer. Most of the band's five other members—middle-age German professionals—had been playing country music together for more than a decade.

With original songs such as "Hot Dogs and Beer" and "Stomp a Hole in it," NightHawk stands out as an authentic American-style country band in the land of lederhosen, where the closest thing to country is usually a cover of "Sweet Home Alabama" at the downtown bar.

SEE COUNTRY ON PAGE 4

James Bailey, lead singer for the German country band NightHawk, performs at a festival in Mragowo, Poland, last summer.

Courtesy of James Bailey



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I wondered whether it was a government plot to get rid of old people when I heard about the class."

— Lara Thomson, 79, member of a weekly parkour class adapted for seniors in London

See story on Page 16

TOP CLICKS ON STRIPES.COM

The most popular stories on our website:

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3. Former Marine uses 'bogus as hell' service record; walks away free man
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5. US personnel in Bahrain prepare for Ramadan

COMING SOON



Music

Ed Sheeran veers toward mainstream on 'x'

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MILITARY

Study: Focus defense budget on rivals

By Travis J. Tritten
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The United States should focus its shrinking defense budget on Russia and China rather than a pivot to the Asia-Pacific region or soft-power solutions such as foreign aid, according to a study published Wednesday by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The study by the nonprofit think tank challenges 10 years of U.S. defense policy, which has focused on unconventional warfare against terrorist insurgents and, more recently, a shift to the Far East.

But looming sequestration budget cuts and ballooning costs mean the Department of Defense goal from just a few years ago of having a broad and versatile military may not be possible by 2021. Instead, the U.S. will be able to afford only a military that is smaller across the board with sharply reduced capacities, according to the CSIS report "Building the 2021 Affordable Military."

The report's three authors spent two years creating defense budget models for the CSIS that project what military planners will face when mandatory sequestration cuts end in eight years. They say an aggressive modernization effort aimed at containing and deterring Cold War foe Russia and rising power China is the "least bad" option in the face of a money crunch.

"Recent events — such as China's more aggressive actions to secure its claims to 90 percent of the South China Sea and Russia's annexation of Crimea — certainly reinforce the idea that relations between the United States and its near-peer competitors seem more conflict-prone," the report said. Defense spending is set to decline by 21 percent over the next eight years due to the Budget Control Act of 2011, also known as sequestration. Compounding the problem is the fact that by 2021, 15 percent more of the budget will be eaten up by increased personnel and other costs, the think tank found.

The most prudent strategy in the next decade — preparing for a conventional war with another great power — would require



BULLIT MARQUEZ/AP

U.S. Marines prepare to depart at the end of a joint U.S.-Philippines naval exercise in the northwestern Philippines on Monday. A think tank's report says looming budget cuts and increasing costs will impede the goal of having a broad, versatile military by 2021.

the U.S. in 2021 to cut \$10 billion in the \$250 billion in defense spending to boost weapons and equipment by \$3 billion, and would increase science and technology spending by 50 percent, according to the report.

Spending would increase for long-range bombers, attack subs, nuclear modernization, national missile defense, and aerial and space intelligence surveillance reconnaissance, as well as more Army heavy brigade combat teams for "tripwire" deployments to counter Russia and China, the report said.

"This aggressive investment in modernization is aimed at sustaining the U.S. high-tech edge versus Russia and China," the authors wrote.

The strategy also would eliminate some surface forces and aircraft due to lack of money.

There would be fewer carriers, littoral combat ships and guided-missile destroyers. Cuts also would claim F-35C jets and P-8A Poseidon anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare aircraft, as well as Air Force fighters seen as vulnerable to area-denial weapons systems being developed by China

in the Pacific, the report said.

Discarded strategies

Meanwhile, the military's ongoing Asia-Pacific pivot following the end of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — a key initiative of the Obama administration — should fall to the wayside, the report said.

The strategy would rely heavily on naval forces, rather than Army ground forces and missile technology, as a maritime buffer specifically against rising Chinese military might. Russia would recede from the forefront.

It would require more carriers, littoral combat ships and destroyers as Marine, amphibious and aviation. Spending on Army heavy brigade combat teams, Air Force fighters, nuclear weapons and missile defense would be reduced.

Cost alone may not be the biggest obstacle. Even under current defense funding, the U.S. is having difficulty focusing on the shift and convincing regional allies of its commitment, the report found.

"The United States is a global power with global interests. A

regional policy, even one as important as the Asia-Pacific, is too difficult to execute," it said.

A third strategy option for 2021 would take \$25 billion in today's dollars from the defense modernization budget and would flow it into foreign aid and nimble military units.

The 25 percent increase over current levels of development aid would go to the Millennium Challenge Corp. foreign aid agency created by Congress in 2004, the international Adaptation Fund climate change aid agency, Internet freedom activities, and other foreign assistance.

The military side of the equation would rely "more on a U.S. global presence provided by Army light infantry and special operations forces to engage in indirect activities," according to the report.

But the strategy is "too optimistic" in light of complex security challenges in Iran, Syria, Mali, Pakistan and elsewhere in the world, the report concluded.

"The effectiveness of an increased reliance on soft power ... to address the underlying social and economic causes of political turmoil is far from clear," it said.

The CSIS report is likely to draw attention from Congress as it works on the coming year's defense budget.

Capitol Hill is largely responsible for the cuts forcing the hard defense choices. Mandatory budget reductions were triggered two years ago after lawmakers could not strike a deal on reducing the federal deficit.

Congress has also refused so far this year to stem rising costs of personnel, health care, acquisitions, and operations and maintenance, which the report found are putting added pressure on defense.

For example, military personnel costs have increased 90 percent since 9/11 while the number of troops has increased by about 3 percent, and that trend is likely to continue, according to the DOD.

Cuts to rein in the ballooning expenses were requested by the department in its annual budget proposal and supported by top military brass.

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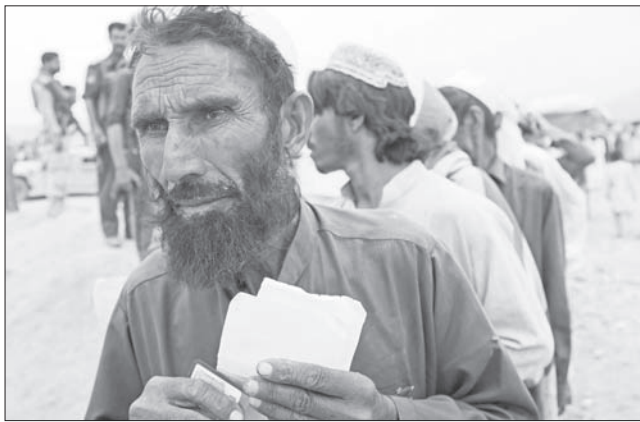


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MILITARY



KEVIN SIEFF/The Washington Post

Refugees from Pakistan wait in line for food and shelter in Khost province, Afghanistan, on Wednesday.

Pakistanis displaced by offensive end up on Afghan side of border

By KEVIN SIEFF
The Washington Post

KHOST, Afghanistan — Two weeks ago, a Pakistani soldier came to Mir Abat Khan's home in North Waziristan and issued a stark threat: If you don't leave your home, we will kill you.

The Pakistani military was about to begin an offensive in the region targeting the Taliban, and Khan's home was in the path of destruction. That's how he ended up here — in a growing refugee camp in Afghanistan where he is waiting in line for a plastic tent and flour provided by the United Nations.

Afghanistan is battling its own insurgency and is unaccustomed to this daily influx of refugees. The United Nations estimates that there are more than 75,000 in Khost province alone, living in a scrubby open field that is a two-day walk from their village across the border in Pakistan.

Khan brought 12 family members on the trek. They left everything behind: their belongings, their food, two donkeys, three cows, 10 chickens.

"We are here with nothing," he said, "and we have no idea how long we will stay."

The Pakistani military operation in North Waziristan, aimed at clearing a longtime Taliban sanctuary, began with airstrikes. Then came what army commanders called a "house-to-house" search for terrorists. The offensive has displaced about a half-million people.

As more of them cross into Afghanistan, officials here have grown concerned about their ability to provide for those refugees in a part of the country plagued by poverty and security problems. When they first arrived, many of the displaced Pakistanis had no shelter from the blistering sun and very little to eat.

"We are just trying to survive," said Omar Khan Wazir, another refugee.

As the Pakistani military continues its offensive, it is likely that Afghanistan is serving as sanctuary to more than just civilian refugees. For years, Pakistani militants have sought refuge in Afghanistan — much as the Afghan Taliban does in Pakistan.

"They've been able to find sanctuary on this side of the border. They are not targeted by our security forces, because they are not our enemy," one former Afghan official said.

Last month, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif urged Afghan President Hamid Karzai to crack down on militants crossing into Afghanistan. On Monday, top Pakistani military officials reiterated that demand.

At the refugee camp in Matun district in Khost, there have been no signs of armed men among the displaced. The refugees opted to come here, rather than another Pakistani city, because of an ethnic connection: The people on both sides of the border are Pashtuns, so they speak the same language and share a culture. The border is a construct that many of them refuse to accept.

It's unclear how long the refugees will remain in Afghanistan. Some suggested their anger at the Pakistani government might keep them here for many months.

"I don't want to go back soon," Khan said. "We've suffered so much in these last weeks."

Subcontractor sued in dispute on war zone pay

By CHARLES D. WILSON
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Federal investigators are examining whether a military subcontractor underpaid scores of medical workers in Afghanistan, pocketing federal funds that the government intended the company use to pay its employees.

A lawsuit brought in Indiana last week by Laura Hawkins, of Bloomington, claims Onsite Occupational Health and Safety Inc. underpaid her for the 84-hour weeks she routinely worked. Twenty other former employees have since joined the lawsuit, which has been moved to federal court. The complaint seeks class action status.

OHS, which is based in Princeton, Ind., denies the allegations, which could involve more than \$7 million in dispute. It says Hawkins was paid appropriately and the claims have no basis.

Alex Bronstein-Moffly, a spokesman for the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, told The Associated Press an investigation is being conducted but declined to elaborate.

The complaint claims that OHS cheated its employees and the government by keeping money that should have been paid out for overtime.

OHS, a subcontractor for another company that is a primary contractor for the Army, provides medical services to U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Hawkins, a radiologic technician, worked for OHS at a site in Afghanistan.

The lawsuit claims Hawkins and other OHS employees were routinely required to work 84 hours a week or more without being paid at an overtime rate for work over 40 hours. The complaint maintains that OHS was obligated under terms of its contracts with the government and

its primary contractor to pay overtime. The lawsuit says OHS refused to release those documents, but that the company is required to abide by federal and Indiana wage laws.

"By retaining monies which the U.S. government intended for payment of wages to OHS employees, OHS is unjustly and wrongfully enriching itself," the lawsuit says.

Hawkins' complaint does not specify an amount of damages. But in an affidavit filed with the U.S. District Court for southern Indiana, OHS Director of Human Capital Jeff Devine calculated the total overtime allegedly due to the company's 237 employees who would be covered if the complaint is found valid at more than \$7 million.

"Onsite believes she was paid properly and that it has not violated the law with regard to Ms. Hawkins or anyone else," Devine said in an email to the AP. In another email, Devine also called the claims "unfounded."

It isn't the first time such claims have surfaced in Afghanistan, though officials say OHS hasn't been investigated before. The Special Inspector General's office alerted Secretary of State John Kerry and other officials to claims of financial mistreatment of subcontractors and employees in June 2013.

The Special Inspector General's office is currently reviewing 23 active complaints involving nonpayment to subcontractors and employees, spokesman Philip J. LaVelle told the AP on Wednesday. LaVelle said the office receives about eight to 10 such complaints each month.

Since December 2013, about \$472,000 in contested payments has been made to subcontractors and employees following inquiries by the office, LaVelle said.

Army: Bergdahl venturing out in public as part of recovery

By JUAN A. LOZANO
The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who was a prisoner of war in Afghanistan for five years, has been allowed to venture off the Texas military base where he is receiving care as part of his "reintegration process" into society, a U.S. Army spokeswoman said Wednesday.

Bergdahl has been allowed to go, with supervision, to a grocery store, restaurants, shopping centers and a library as part of

the process of getting him comfortable with being out in public, Army spokeswoman Arwen Consaul said.

Bergdahl, 28, has been receiving care at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio since returning to the United States on June 13. He initially was being treated at Brooke Army Medical Center at the fort but was shifted last week to outpatient care at the military base.

The Idaho native was freed by the Taliban on May 31 in a deal struck by the Obama adminis-

tration in which five senior Taliban officials were released from detention at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Bergdahl had disappeared from his post in Paktika province in eastern Afghanistan on June 30, 2009. Some former members of his unit have said that he left of his own accord.

He has not commented publicly on the circumstances of his disappearance, and the Army has made no charges against him. The Army has said it is investigating Bergdahl's disappearance and capture, but that investiga-

tors will not interview him until those helping him recover say it is all right to do so.

Bergdahl's "reintegration process" has slowly increased his exposure to social settings and groups of people, giving him "a little bit more every day," Consaul said.

It began with going to facilities at Fort Sam Houston, including the commissary and the gym. It has since progressed to going into San Antonio and visiting various businesses. On those visits, Bergdahl is accompanied by members

of his reintegration team, including a psychologist.

The process is about "getting [Bergdahl] comfortable with being out in public and interacting with large groups of people," Consaul said.

It is unknown if Bergdahl's family has seen him since his return to the United States. Consaul said because of a request by Bergdahl's family for privacy, the Army cannot comment on that.

No time has been set for when Bergdahl's reintegration process will finish, she said.

MILITARY

Country: Ex-Airman recorded some tracks on-base at Ramstein

FROM FRONT PAGE

NightHawk won the "Band of the Year" prize at the 2014 Country Music Messe in Cologne, a huge festival that draws hundreds of musicians from throughout Europe and thousands of international country music fans. It was NightHawk's biggest award since its formation in 1997.

Since then, NightHawk has gone into overdrive. Last summer, the band released its third album, "Everything Is Alright" — its first with Bailey.

Bailey produced the album under his label Bomb Shack Records. He recorded some of the music in a tiny spare bedroom in his house, padding the walls for better sound. The drums were recorded in the Explosive Ordnance Disposal shop's supply room on Ramstein Air Base, where no padding was necessary since the room is filled with blankets and sleeping bags. For every CD sold, \$1 is donated to the EOD Warrior Foundation.

Of the 12 songs on the album, 10 are original, most written by Bailey.

One song is a cover recognizable only by its familiar lyrics. It's a twangy, guitar-picking version of Korn's rap-metal classic "Freak on a Leash."

The Korn cover was inspiration for the band's second video, shot inside a barn in Rammelsbach, a small village near Kusel, where Bailey and NightHawk bass guitarist Achim Rausch live. The video stars members of two local German line dance clubs who pose as zombies and chase the band into the barn. When the frightened band members grab their instruments and start to play, the zombies break into a trance-like line dance.

"He's our fifth singer in the band," Rausch said of Bailey. "We had two American singers before. He's the best."

Bailey, 35, formed his first band while attending high school in Paso Robles, Calif. He could sing and play the guitar and drums. The rock band fell apart after the drummer earned a college football scholarship.

In 1997, a year after graduating, Bailey hitched his star to the Air Force.

That same year, half a world away, keyboardist Dirk Steinhauer, a worker at his family's flour mill and some friends struck up the idea of starting a country band. They found Rausch and guitarist Dieter Sladko, who along with Steinhauer, are the original members still with the group today. The name NightHawk was taken from the Tom Waits album "Nighthawks at the Diner."

They loved the sound and challenge of country music, so they stuck with it, even as members came and went, including an American drummer and two former U.S. soldiers who joined in Kaiserslautern — Don Jensen and Joe Hawkins — who were lead singers at different times.

Bailey's career as an ordnance disposal technician took him on assignments around the world, from protecting former President George W. Bush on trips to

Botsswana, South Africa and Turkey, to NATO missions in various countries. From 2002 to 2005, he was on active duty in Germany.

Forced into medical retirement by a diagnosis of narcolepsy, Bailey found his way back to Germany in 2011, when a civilian contractor job at Ramstein became available. With more time on his hands now that he wasn't active duty, he was back making music.

By then, NightHawk was looking for a new lead singer.

"We needed an American front man," Sladko said.

When Bailey saw NightHawk's ad in a local classified website, his eyes popped.

"I saw them in the Irish House back in 2003," he said of the band. "They" had this huge light show, huge sound, they're running all over the place, bringing energy to the crowd. So when I saw that ad, I'm just seeing all my prayers being answered."

A skeptical Rausch invited him to his house in Rammelsbach one afternoon to audition. Earlier that day, Rausch had auditioned several Americans who had oversold their singing talents.

Rausch asked Bailey to sing the Eagles' "Hotel California" — the bassist's ultimate test.

"He is the first singer who can do that song," Rausch said. "That is my dream, since I play music, to play 'Hotel California' live."

The band, which mixes country with classic hard rock at its live shows, performs the song at every concert.

Rounding out the NightHawk lineup is drummer David Schneider, an information technology specialist for the German government, and guitarist and mandolinist Arndt Müller, a pharmaceutical representative.

Bailey said the best part about being in the band has been "the traveling and experiencing different cultures. NightHawk has performed in Lithuania, Poland, Denmark, Switzerland, Austria, France, Luxembourg and Germany."

"We enjoy the small intimate gigs and love playing for U.S. troops," he said, "but we sure do have a blast at the big festivals."

Americans are among their fans, Bailey said.

Though he will take a break from NightHawk this summer when he goes to the States on a fellowship, the former airman will maintain ties to the band.

The group will continue writing and recording songs together, he said.

He will return in September to shoot the band's fourth video, for "Tin Man," a song written by Bailey's buddy, Steve Horton.

"It has been a fun two years," Bailey said, "but we're not finished yet."

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Officials: US training Somali forces in antiterrorism fight

By CHRIS CARROLL
AND JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — New details are emerging about the U.S. military mission in Somalia, where it was revealed that as many as 120 U.S. special operators are training and advising local Somali forces in their fight against the Islamist insurgent group al-Shabab.

Defense officials speaking on the condition of anonymity confirmed that teams of advisers have been deploying to the country since 2007 for noncombat missions, and that the numbers have gradually grown over the years.

The advisers in past years worked with troops from the African Union Mission to Somalia, but are now directly training Somali armed forces. Teams of advisers are working in locations throughout the country; the numbers vary as deployments begin and end.

"We've had these advisers working out of AFRICOM for a while," a defense official said. "It's Special Forces doing what they do in the area of training and advising."

While there are no plans to increase the size of the advisory

mission, officials said, the United States' goal is to normalize relations with Somalia, a project that would include more involvement with and support for the Somali National Army.

"We're talking about deepening the whole of government relationship, and that will include military," a defense official said.

AFRICOM declined to discuss in detail the mission in Somalia, emphasizing that the operations have involved limited numbers of troops.

For security reasons, we will not disclose any specific information regarding numbers of personnel, formations, resources or time lines regarding this commitment," said Ben Benson, an AFRICOM spokesman. "However, we are talking about a small number of personnel. Regarding the reported number of personnel (120 troops), it is important to note that there was no single deployment of such a size; rather, we have operated in smaller groups that have moved in and out of multiple locations in the area."

In recent years, U.S. counterterrorism strategy in Somalia has focused on bolstering the capabili-

ties of African Union forces that have been doing much of the fighting against Islamic militants in Somalia. Efforts have centered on training and equipping those AU troops, many of whom have come from Uganda and Burundi.

U.S. officials have credited AU fighters with turning the tide in Somalia, where al-Shabab was once poised to overrun the capital city of Mogadishu.

Though the group remains a threat, it has been pushed out of numerous former strongholds in Somalia in the past couple years.

Earlier this year, the U.S. military disclosed that a regular presence of U.S. troops — generally less than two dozen — is in Mogadishu at any given time as part of a "military coordination cell."

That team, along with other military personnel scattered around the country, remain focused on building up regional militaries operating in Somalia as well as the Somali force itself.

"Our purpose is to strengthen their capability to bring security and stability to the region," Benson said.

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JOE GROMELSK/Stars and Stripes

Queueing for monument climb

Tourists wait in line to climb the recently reopened Washington Monument in Washington on Thursday.

Glitches: Burn pit registry back online, but problems reported

FROM FRONT PAGE

"What a creak," Joel DeLand wrote. "I can't get past the deployment page because they have it all messed up and won't let me change it. Typical VA."

"Wow. Even the link gives you the run-around," Dan Longenberger wrote. "It takes you to the site, you click on the link there and then you're basically in an infinite loop."

"Tried three times now," Joseph Cormier posted Saturday. "The website is nonhelpful."

VA officials said they were looking into the situation Tuesday.

"The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry is currently online and operational, but as we increase capacity, we may conduct system maintenance to make necessary updates," VA spokeswoman Walinda West said Tuesday, adding that the updates could cause some lag time.

Last week, 36 servicemembers out of 11,368 were wrongly told they were ineligible before the site was taken down to address the problem, West said.

The site was back up Friday afternoon, as West said it was expected to be, but veterans try-

ing to register over the weekend reported long waits, broken links and frustration.

Others became stuck trying to create a password, or, when they were able to enter the new password, encountered a page that said access is "forbidden."

The registry is open to anyone who served in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, was stationed in Djibouti after Sept. 1, 2001, or who served in the 1991 Persian Gulf War and may have been exposed to oil fires and dust. Registrants may also request a free medical exam.

MILITARY

The people have spoken: US goalie is secretary of defense



JULIO CORTES/AP

United States goalkeeper Tim Howard stretches to make one of his record 16 saves during the World Cup round of 16 soccer match between Belgium and the U.S. on Tuesday.

By HENDRICK SIMOES
Stars and Stripes

The game wasn't even over when American fans took to social media to call for goalie Tim Howard to be the next U.S. president or secretary of defense. In the U.S. World Cup 2-1 loss against Belgium on Tuesday, Howard made a record 16 saves in a World Cup match that instantly promoted him to an American hero.

Someone even changed the secretary of defense's Wikipedia entry, showing a picture of Howard and naming him as the incumbent.

Acknowledging the joke — or per-

haps concerned about job security

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel called Howard Wednesday to congratulate him on his record-breaking game and a great run in Brazil, the Pentagon said in a statement. Hagel invited Howard and the entire team to visit the Pentagon.

He also told Howard that, with some training, he could someday become the real secretary of defense.

The Pentagon released a picture of the phone call showing Hagel holding a soccer ball — but it's unlikely Hagel will become the next U.S. goalkeeper.

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VA chief medical inspector retires

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The chief medical inspector for the Department of Veterans Affairs has retired, following a report that his office downplayed whistleblower complaints outlining serious problems at VA facilities across the country, acting VA Secretary Sloan Gibson said Wednesday.

Dr. John R. Pierce had served as medical inspector since 2004 and was deputy medical inspector for two years before that.

Pierce's office came under scrutiny last week after the independent Office of Special Counsel issued a scathing report that identified "a troubling pattern of deficient patient care" at VA facilities around the country. The problems were pointed out by whistleblowers but downplayed by the medical inspector and other top officials, the report said.

Gibson met with Special Counsel Carolyn Lerner on Tuesday and reaffirmed his commitment to prevent retaliation against employees who identify or report problems.

Gibson said last week he was deeply disappointed by the allegations presented by Lerner in a June 23 letter to President Barack Obama and vowed a quick response. A departmental review of the special counsel's report is due by Monday.

Pierce is one of a half-dozen high-ranking officials who have resigned or retired from the VA following a national outcry over reports of patient deaths, widespread treatment delays and falsified records at VA facilities nationwide. VA Secretary Eric Shinseki resigned in late May. Since then, several other officials have resigned, including the agency's top health official and the man who replaced him as acting undersecretary for health.

The agency's general counsel and assistant secretary for congressional and legislative affairs also have left in recent weeks.

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MILITARY



TIMOTHY WILSON/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

The USS Mustin, USS Meyer and USS Cable test a carbon fiber-based obscuring fog south of Guam in late June to test its potential effectiveness against anti-ship missiles.

Navy developing a fog for war

By ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The U.S. Navy is sea-testing a carbon-fiber “fog” that officials hope will defeat the guidance systems of missiles aimed at its ships.

The Pandarra Fog that shrouded three ships south of Guam recently is one part future tech, one part throwback.

Obscurants have been used widely by combat aircraft and vehicles since World War II. The simplest systems used metal particles to mask infrared signatures, thereby throwing off a heat-seeking missile. However, guided missiles have advanced to detect other signatures across the electromagnetic spectrum.

China has developed a missile designed to strike a moving aircraft carrier, as part of a bid to deter access to international waters in the East and South China Sea, according to the Defense Department’s annual report on China’s military. Such advances have left planners looking at ways to counter such missiles, including radar and satellite jamming, cyberwarfare and other methods besides the costly and risky method of shooting one out of the sky.

Pandarra Fog “is a potential game-changer in terms of effectiveness of a layered approach to [missile defense],” said Capt. Dave Adams, head of the 7th Fleet Warfighting Initiatives Group.

In late June, the USS Mustin, USS Meyer and USS Cable tested the obscuring over four days in a variety of sea conditions south of Guam, 7th Fleet officials said.

“This was also the first time ships were placed in the obscuring cloud, and we significantly advanced our hypothesis that there would be no damage to our ships and equipment,” Adams said. “There’s still more work to do, but results all point in the right direction.”

The Army and the Air Force also brought equipment through the fog to test out Pandarra Fog’s potential.

The Army has been looking

for a new obscurant since at least 2012, when it solicited bids for \$100,000 in research grants. The grant noted that “current smokes have significant environmental persistence that may pose health hazards.”

Pandarra Fog’s composition is still a secret that Navy officials declined to discuss, though Adams said it had been “extensively tested” to ensure no harm to sailors or the environment.

Besides making U.S. ships harder to strike, the fog could also be useful for countertargeting, Adams added.

Pandarra Fog is still likely years away from fleetwide deployment, assuming the service ultimately adopts it; Navy officials must next prepare a roadmap for technical and tactical requirements before the service considers an obscurant program.

Multiple Navy academics have long argued that ship obscurants make sense both tactically and financially.

A 2012 Naval Postgraduate School research paper advocated the adaptation of the Army’s Humvee-mounted Coyote units for use on ships. Six of the units, which cost about \$150,000 each, could cover a strike group of four to five ships, according to authors Dylan Ross and Jimmy Harmon.

A 30-pound box of obscurant, which would last about four min-

utes, costs about \$1,000, according to Thomas Culora, a Naval War college professor who called for an obscurant program in a 2010 paper.

Meanwhile, a single Chinese DF-21D missile costs \$5 million or more, Culora said.

“Employment of a relatively low-cost obscurant system would prompt potential opponents to re-examine and adapt their current missile systems,” Culora said. “This too begins to tip the cost differential back in favor of the defense.”

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Critic of religion in military defends pay

Stars and Stripes

Over the last decade, Military Religious Freedom Foundation founder and president Mikey Weinstein has been a vocal advocate for the separation of church and state in the military.

According to an Air Force Times examination of MRFF tax filings, what Weinstein pays himself for running the nonprofit MRFF is well above the typical top salaries at most nonprofits.

Weinstein defended his salary, citing the amount of work and hours he devotes to his cause.

In 2012, Weinstein received total compensation worth \$273,355 — about 47 percent of all money the MRFF raised through contributions and grants that year, according to IRS filings accessed on the nonprofit transparency website GuideStar.

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America paid its founder and CEO Paul Rieckhoff \$145,000 in 2012, or a little more than 2 percent of the \$6.1 million IAVA raised that year. Wounded Warrior Project CEO Steven Nardizzi received \$311,538 in 2012, or 0.2 percent of the nearly \$155 million that charity raised that year. Nardizzi was paid more than Weinstein in actual dollars, but Wounded Warrior Project’s revenues far exceed the \$584,351 the MRFF brought in during 2012.

Weinstein’s compensation is more than double the average

compensation for nonprofit CEOs, the Times reported, noting that the charity CEOs nationwide received a median \$125,942 in compensation in 2011, citing the most recent study by the watchdog group Charity Navigator.

Small charities’ CEOs typically earned \$95,661, the Times wrote, again citing Charity Navigator, which said the MRFF falls below the budget threshold Charity Navigator uses for small nonprofits.

Weinstein votes on his own salary as part of a three-member board that is smaller than the five-member board Charity Navigator recommends for nonprofits. And MRFF counts him — a paid employee — as an independent voting board member, an apparent violation of IRS rules.

In interviews with Air Force Times, Weinstein — the only compensated employee at the MRFF — strongly defended his compensation.

“I handle a lot of different hats here,” Weinstein said. “I handle all development and do all the fundraising. My wife’s a full-time volunteer and has the term development director, but I’m the one that does it. I handle all of the clients’ care and intake, and all of the interface with the clients. I handle all of the stuff with the press.”

“It ends up being about a 15-hour-a-day workweek, seven days a week. It’s a tremendous amount of time and effort, and we feel it’s perfectly appropriate.”

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MILITARY

Panel's report sets stage for pay reform

By TOM PHILPOTT

Military folks upset that recent defense budgets have targeted their pay and benefits have no reason to fear a new 358-page "interim" report from the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission.

The nine-member, blue-ribbon panel does present, in impressive detail, the full range of military and veteran pay, allowances and benefits that Congress has enacted in recent decades, including the past 13 years of war. It's a document recruiters could use to great effect, if not for its left.

But the commission reaches no conclusions on whether any of the compensation offerings, or their combined effect, is excessive. Therefore, it gives little comfort to budget analysts and even military leaders who want to dampen compensation costs through caps on pay raises and housing allowances, increases in health care fees and cuts to the commissary benefit.

Commission Chairman Alphonso Maldon Jr. said the intent of the interim report is to present a "comprehensive resource tool" for understanding military compensation. It shows what commissioners have learned the past year, and "sets the stage" for critical analysis and recommendations to determine compensation. A final report to President Barack Obama and Congress is due next February.

The breadth of compensation programs for military members, retirees, reserve components, veterans and families is impressive, delivered across several federal departments. The total funding in fiscal 2014: \$340 billion.

Commissioners don't suggest here that cuts or even major policy changes are warranted due to cost growth alone. Their goal is to replace outdated programs, and "streamline" steps taken over time to solve compensation needs, with a more modern, flexible and efficient system.

"Although the Commission found that compensation funding has increased substantially over the last two decades, as has been repeatedly reported in the national press, these simple trends need to be examined in greater detail before any conclusion can be drawn regarding fiscal sustainability," the report says.

It echoes a point made often by military associations and veterans' groups in answer to critics

MILITARY UPDATE

who say compensation growth has been excessive the past decade or more. Any cost growth comparisons "are highly dependent on when the comparisons are begun," the report says.

For example, Congress did give the military annual pay raises from 1998 through 2010 that exceeded private-sector wage growth, as measured by the government's Employment Cost Index, or ECI.

"Beginning the comparison in 1976, however, shows the post-1998 pay raises to be a reaction to military pay raises that were lower than ECI from 1982 through 1998," the report says. "Indeed, policymakers made a concerted effort around the turn of the 21st Century to increase compensation ... to counteract recruiting and retention challenges."

A second factor that boosted compensation the past 15 years was general inflation in the economy. Overall prices rose 43 percent, but U.S. health costs jumped 76 percent and education costs 129 percent.

Wars, too, boosted compensation spending, the commission says, with additional manpower recruited and health care expanded to treat war-related injuries including post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injuries.

Finally, Congress did approve new military benefits. The commission highlights five since 2001 that all had big price tags:

- Enactment of Tricare for Life for Medicare-eligible military retirees and family members.

- An end to a reduction or "offset" at age 62 in Survivor Benefit Plan payments, tied to eligibility for Social Security.

- Post-9/11 GI Bill, a \$10 billion-per-year expansion of education benefits for servicemembers, veterans and their families.

- Concurrent receipt, which allowed more than 500,000 military retirees to draw both full military retired pay and VA compensation for service-connected disabilities, ending a costly, dollar-for-dollar offset.

- Extra increases to Basic Allowance for Housing so rates now cover 100 percent of median rental costs, versus

85 percent before 2005.

The commission notes that administration's 2015 budget seeks to slow compensation growth by capping pay and BAH increases and raising Tricare fees. The Congressional Budget Office just this week suggested that the Department of Defense budget to meet Budget Control Act limits could include raising Tricare fees on retirees and ending concurrent receipt for disabled retirees.

The commission, however, isn't ready to say such dramatic changes are needed to make personnel account-sustainable. Indeed, the report makes another point often argued by military personnel advocates: Despite significant growth in personnel costs, funding for compensation still repre-

sents roughly 30 percent of the DOD budget.

The commission acknowledges that defense budgets face tough budget challenges. It also concedes that having compensation costs equal to a third of total defense budgets is not "evidence of fiscal sustainability."

Indeed, it says, whether personnel costs are sustainable might be better assessed by comparing growth of pay, health care, retirement and quality-of-life programs the past 15 years with growth of private-sector wages using the ECI, or with the economy using Gross Domestic Product.

The report presents this comparison in a line graph without comment. However, the lines depicting military and VA health

costs since 1998 are seen soaring above those for the ECI and GDP. Elsewhere, the report notes that Tricare Prime premiums rose by only 17 percent from 1999 to 2013, while premiums for private sector workers increased 196 percent.

What commissioners actually want to change about military pay and benefits won't be known for seven months.

We do know, and the interim report emphasizes, that the final report will not call for cuts to retirement benefits for current members or to those already retired. The commission charter doesn't allow it.

Send comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, VA, 20120, email milupdate@aol.com or twitter: Tom Philpott @Military_Update.

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AF: Malfunctions led to November Reaper crash

Air Force officials said that GPS and guidance system malfunctions led to the crash of a multimillion-dollar MQ-9 Reaper drone into Lake Ontario in November.

The resulting failures sent the 10,500-pound aircraft descending in a clockwise spiral at 5,000 feet per minute, with crews unable to change its course.

"I can't recover it," the aircraft's unnamed pilot said, according to an Air Combat Command Accident Investigation Board report released Tuesday.

The Reaper drone from the 174th Attack Wing in Syracuse, N.Y., crashed Nov. 12 about 12 miles from the lake's eastern shore and 35 miles from Fort Drum's Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, where it took off for a training exercise at 10:42 a.m.

From wire reports

PACIFIC

Hiroo Endo, left, Ed Ikuma, center, and Yoroku Ito were awarded France's Order of the Legion of Honor for their deeds in France during World War II with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.



PHOTOS BY WYATT OLSON/Stars and Stripes

French Rear Adm. Ann Cullere kisses Hiroo Endo on the cheek after pinning on him the ribbon of France's Order of the Legion of Honor during a ceremony Wednesday at Pearl Harbor.

Japanese-Americans receive high honor for WWII actions

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii — Hiroo Endo offered a concise synopsis of World War II on Wednesday afternoon.

"I lost some cousins. I lost some friends," he said in a voice made frail by his 91 years. "That's what war is about. You kill them or they kill you."

Endo and five other Japanese-American veterans of the Army's famed 442nd Central Postal Directory were presented France's Order of the Legion of Honor aboard the French ship *Prairial*, which was docked in Pearl Harbor for the monthlong Rim of the Pacific exercise.

The 442nd was largely composed of Nisei, children born in America of parents who emigrated from Japan. Most Nisei served in the European theater, even as the United States enacted a policy of rounding up and confining Americans of Japanese descent in internment camps.

The Legion of Honor award was founded by Napoleon and is considered a true soldier's medal, said Rear Adm. Ann Cullere, French naval commander, French Polynesia, who presented the ribbons to the men on the deck of the *Prairial*. After pinning on the red medals, she kissed each man on both cheeks.

Receiving the honor were Endo, Shiro Aoki, Albert Brum, Yasunori Deguchi, Ed Ikuma and Yoroku Ito. Aoki was unable to at-

tend, and his award was accepted by a close friend.

Asked afterward about his thoughts on receiving the award, Deguchi struggled to find the right words.

"How can you explain what this feels like?" he said, as though speaking to himself.

"I feel really honored. But I still think it's not what I did personally but it was the collective effort of the unit that you might say accomplished some of the things that we thought should be done."

Cullere said the "little iron men" had earned "France's eternal gratitude" for their part in battling the Nazis in France. War correspondents had dubbed the soldiers of the 442nd as "little men of iron" because of their fierce fighting in Italy. Their intensity earned them another nickname: "The Purple Heart Battalion."

The unit is known for its fabled rescue of the Lost Battalion in the Vosges Mountains in France in October 1944. Soldiers from the 141st Texas Regiment were surrounded behind enemy lines with little food or water, and men of the 100th Infantry of the 442nd battled almost nonstop for six days to eventually rescue 211 men.

They lost almost as many men in the rescue attempt, according to some accounts. Perhaps not surprising for a combat unit whose motto was "Go for broke."

"Simply, don't hold back," Deguchi said of the motto, emblazoned on his shirt. "Give it all."

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Police: Expired MREs being sold on Korean black market

Group could face charges for selling rations stored in unsanitary conditions

By ASHLEY ROWLAND
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Police are investigating nine South Koreans for their role in a ring that collected discarded Meals, Ready to Eat after U.S. military exercises and sold them on the black market.

South Korean police say members of the group, which included a 76-year-old man, could face prosecution not for stealing the MREs but rather for peddling food that had been stored in unsanitary conditions.

"They didn't consider consumers' health as long as they could make money," an officer with the Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency said this week, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. Some of the confiscated MREs were found in a storage unit near Pohang that had no air conditioning, according to police.

The group, which included several contractors who were hired at U.S. Forces Korea bases, picked up unused MREs that had been thrown away or earmarked for burning after military exercises and then sold them to black marketers, according to police. The MREs were eventually sold in markets in cities including Seoul,

"They didn't consider consumers' health as long as they could make money."

Seoul Metropolitan
Police Agency officer

Dongducheon and Yangju.

One dealer sold MREs at a market near Seoul's Dongmyo station for about 30,000 won, or about \$29.70, per box, accepting only cash so police couldn't track his activities.

In all, authorities confiscated about 130 boxes containing 10 to 12 MREs each since May, according to a statement released by Seoul police Tuesday. Police said the MREs were taken from Kunsan Air Base and a South Korean-owned training field in Pohang, which is also home to the U.S. Marines' Camp Mjuk.

Police began investigating the ring in May as part of a government crackdown on food safety violations. Members of the group are suspected of violating South Korea's Food Sanitation Act because they did not report their activities to the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety.

The Seoul police officer said members of the group will not face theft charges because they "gathered" but did not steal the discarded MREs.

A Seoul detective said that in addition to illegally distributing the MREs, the group violated a ban on the importation of U.S. military combat rations.

Five other South Koreans are under investigation for selling prepackaged military meals from other countries, including Great Britain, a press release said.

The case will be sent to the Seoul Central District Prosecutor's office in mid-July. If charged and found guilty, the South Koreans could face fines of as much as 100 million won, about \$99,000 each, or jail sentences of as much as 10 years, the officer said.

MREs have long been a hot item on the black market in South Korea, where they are bought by fishing and camping enthusiasts, or by those simply curious about U.S. food. A popular Korean reality television show, which features aspects of life in the armed forces, has also increased interest in military culture, including MREs, police said.

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MILITARY

Air Force reinstates death sentence for airman

By NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force appellate court this week reinstated the death sentence of Andrew Witt, reversing its decision in August that struck down the sentence on grounds of inadequate defense efforts.

In an opinion issued on Monday, the Air Force Court of Appeals said that Witt's court-martial on charges he'd murdered a young married couple had been fair, that his lawyers had been competent and that any mistakes they had made were inconsequential.

"The overwhelming weight of the evidence paints a picture of a cold, calculated, vicious crime, carried out in the furtherance of a purely protectionist and self-serving objective," the opinion states. "(T)he evidence in aggravation was powerful, plentiful, and persuasive."

The decision comes a decade, almost to the day, after Witt stabbed to death Senior Airman Andrew Schliepsiek and his wife, Jamie, in their home on Warner Robins Air Force Base, Ga.

On the morning of July 5, 2004, the pair — in their mid-20s, both from Peoria, Ill., and married for two years — were a week away from leaving the Air Force to return to civilian life.

That Witt had killed the couple was never in doubt. His three-law-



Witt

yer defense team worked to spare him from the death penalty by trying to convince the jury that he'd been unable to form premeditation to murder in part because of the effects of adrenaline.

In August, three members of a five-judge appellate panel agreed that deficiencies in the defense by Witt's lawyers, none of whom had tried a capital case before, had caused Witt not to receive a fair trial for sentencing.

The judges were particularly troubled by the fact that the lawyers had not explored whether Witt's actions might have resulted from a possible traumatic brain injury he suffered from a motorcycle crash four months before the murders. Those judges also said that the defense should have pursued evidence about Witt's mother's inpatient mental-health care when he was a teenager, and that it should have sought testimony from a guard who thought Witt was remorseful.

"(H)ad (the jurors) been confronted with this additional mitigating evidence, there is a

reasonable likelihood that at least one member would have struck a different balance between the aggravating and mitigating factors and would have returned with a different sentence," those judges wrote in the August opinion.

But in Monday's decision, four of six appellate judges reconsidering the case after a request by Air Force prosecutors disagreed.

"Although the motorcycle accident is undisputed, it has never been determined that the appellant sustained a TBI. But even assuming he did, not all TBIs make a person more prone to violence." More importantly, the opinion continued, most people testified that they noticed no changes in Witt's behavior after the accident.

Why Witt, who had no criminal record, committed the brutal murders was never clear. According to testimony, Witt had engaged in a series of heated phone calls with Schliepsiek, who was incensed that Witt had made a pass at his wife, and Witt was apparently concerned that Schliepsiek might ruin him. Witt also said that he didn't want to leave witnesses.

Prosecutors suggested he was just "evil."

Witt stabbed Schliepsiek twice, paralyzing him, then turned the knife on an intervening friend, Senior Airman Jason King, who broke free and ran.

Witt next smashed through the locked bedroom door to get to Jamie Schliepsiek, as her husband, lying bleeding on the floor, managed to call 911, all the while pleading for his wife's life. Witt stabbed her five times and broke her arm. Then he stabbed Andrew once more, through the heart.

Regarding the issue of Witt's mother's record of mental-health treatment, the appellate court found, "the weight of the evidence adduced at trial suggests this theme would have been an even harder sell than the one involving the motorcycle accident and the possibility of a TBI."

"In other words, it is not enough for the appellant to show that his counsel overlooked certain mitigation and extenuation evidence and that such evidence might have made a difference; rather, the appellant must show that such overlooked evidence would have been sufficiently persuasive to give rise to a reasonable probability of a different outcome."

It's unlikely that Monday's decision by the military appellate court will be the last word. The case will now go before the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. That is likely to happen within about 18 months.

The sentence could then be appealed to the Supreme Court. Upon any Supreme Court review,

it would be up to the president to approve the sentence. A further appeal is then possible before federal judges.

Eleven men sentenced to death at courts-martial since 1984 have had their death sentences overturned and were subsequently sentenced to life in prison, according to the Death Penalty Information Center.

No military member has been executed since 1961, when Army Pvt. John Bennett was hanged for raping an 11-year-old Austrian girl seven years earlier and attempting to drown her.

Witt, now his early 30s, is the only airman on death row at Fort Leavenworth's prison. All five others are soldiers, all enlisted except for former Maj. Nidal Hasan.

The lengthy death penalty process, with its numerous delays and hearings in a variety of courts over what can be decades, takes a toll on survivors.

"There's anguish, anxiety. There isn't a day that I don't think about it," Dave Schliepsiek, Andrew's father, said in August. "If they would have given [Witt] life without parole, I'd have been upset, but would I have been in a better place? Yes. But when they gave him the death penalty, they also gave it to me. Now, any less than the death penalty is a loss to us."

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NATION

US seeks more security at some overseas airports

By KEN DILANIAN
AND EILEEN SULLIVAN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. intelligence officials are concerned that al-Qaida is trying to develop a new and improved bomb that could go undetected through airport security.

There is no indication that such a bomb has been created or that there's a specific threat to the U.S., but the Obama administration on Wednesday called for tighter security measures at foreign airports that have direct flights to the U.S.

American intelligence has picked up indications that bomb makers from Yemen-based al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula have traveled to Syria to link up with the al-Qaida affiliate there, known as the Nusra Front, according to a counterterrorism official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was

not authorized to speak publicly about the matter by name. The enhanced security measures have been in the works for the past month, he said.

Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula long has been fixated on bringing down airplanes with hidden explosives. It was behind failed and thwarted plots involving suicide bombers with explosives designed to be hidden inside underwear and explosives secreted inside printer cartridges shipped on cargo planes.

During the past year, Americans and others from the West have traveled to Syria to join the fight against the Syrian government. The fear is that fighters with U.S. or other Western passports, who therefore are subject to less stringent security screening, could carry such bombs onto American planes.

The counterterrorism official declined to describe the bomb. Officials in the past have raised



FRANK RUMPFENHORST, DPA/AP

Passengers queue Thursday at a security checkpoint at the airport in Frankfurt, Germany.

concerns about nonmetallic explosives being surgically implanted inside travelers' bodies, designed to be undetectable in pat-downs or metal detectors.

The call for increased security was not connected to Iraq or the recent violence there, said a second U.S. counterterrorism official who was not authorized to speak publicly by name. Another U.S. official, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said the increased security measures had nothing to do with the upcoming July Fourth holiday or any specific threat.

"The extra security is out of an 'abundance of caution,' the U.S. official said.

"People should not overreact to it or overspeculate about what's

going on, but there clearly are concerns centered around aviation security that we need to be vigilant about," Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said late Wednesday on MSNBC.

British airports stepped up security after the reports.

Authorities said in a statement that passengers "should not experience significant disruption" and that there would be no change in the threat level. "The safety and security of the public is our paramount concern," the statement said. "The UK has some of the most robust aviation security measures and we will continue to take all the steps necessary to ensure that public safety is maintained."

Arthur approaches NC; vacationers head out

RODANTHE, N.C. — Arthur strengthened to a hurricane early Thursday and threatened to give North Carolina a glancing blow on Independence Day, prompting thousands of vacationers and residents to leave parts of the state's popular but flood-prone Outer Banks.

Hatteras Island was under a mandatory evacuation order for visitors and residents, with officials asking an estimated 35,000 people to leave through North Carolina Route 12, the only road on and off Hatteras.

Forecasters expect Arthur to whip past the Outer Banks on Friday without making landfall but still bringing rain, heavy winds, storm surge and dangerous rip tides.

On Thursday morning, Arthur was about 300 miles southwest of Cape Hatteras and moving north about 9 mph with maximum sustained winds of 80 mph.

After suspect dies, FBI seeks child rape victims

Investigators combing through a stash of more than 50,000 images and videos of child pornography hidden in a bedside table in Matthew Coniglio's Georgia home made an even more horrifying discovery: cassette tapes they say show him raping and molesting girls.

All were unconscious, apparently drugged, FBI Special Agent William Kirkconnell, who viewed the tapes, told The Associated Press.

Many of the victims' faces cannot be clearly identified, so investigators don't know how many girls were attacked. The youngest victim appears to be about 10 years old.

Authorities' best chance for resolving the raft of unanswered questions ended on April 20. Ten days after his arrest on child pornography charges, Coniglio hanged himself in his Savannah jail cell in an apparent suicide.

Report on simpler stem cells withdrawn

NEW YORK — U.S. and Japanese scientists who reported that they'd found a startlingly simple way to make stem cells withdrew that claim Wednesday, admitting to "extensive" errors in the research.

In two papers published in January in the journal *Nature*, the researchers said that they'd been able to transform ordinary mouse cells into versatile stem cells by exposing them to a mildly acidic environment. Someday, scientists hope to harness stem cells to grow replacement tissue for treating a variety of diseases.

While researchers have long been able to perform such transformations with a different method, the newly reported technique was far simpler, and the papers caused a sensation — and some skepticism — in the research community. They were also widely reported in the media, including by The Associated Press.

From The Associated Press

Poll: Obama, Bush, worst of presidents after World War II

By CHUCK RAASCH
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

WASHINGTON — Apparently "absence makes the heart grow fonder" works in politics, too. According to a new Quinnipiac University national poll, pluralities of Americans think the last two presidents have been the worst since World War II.

The poll, released Wednesday, says that 33 percent of respondents called Barack Obama the worst president during the past 70 years, and 28 percent said that of George W. Bush. They outranked all other presidents for that dubious distinction.

Ronald Reagan (35 percent), Bill Clinton (18) and John F. Kennedy (15) scored best when respondents were asked to name the best president since World War II. Some 8 percent said that of Obama.

Missourian Harry S. Truman came in sixth-best of the 12 presidents since World War II, with 4 percent calling him the best (a point behind Dwight Eisenhower). Truman and Kennedy had virtually no respondents calling them the worst, and therefore came closest in that category. Richard Nixon (13 percent) and

Jimmy Carter (8 percent) were chosen as the third- and fourth-worst presidents in this poll.

Of the two judged worst, respondents were split when asked who was better — Obama (39 percent) or George W. Bush (40 percent).

Adding to the election-year woes for Obama and Democrats in the 2014 congressional races, 45 percent of respondents said the country would have been better off had Mitt Romney defeated Obama in 2012, while 38 percent said the United States would have been worse off.

If there is any consolation for Obama, it is that 34 percent of respondents called George W. Bush the worst president since World War II when a similar question was asked in 2006, the sixth year of Bush's presidency. Obama is now in the sixth year of his.

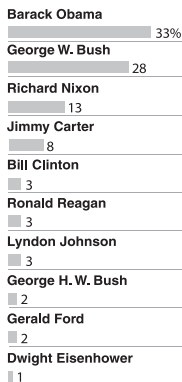
Obama's job approval in this new poll is 40 percent; 53 percent disapproved.

Obama gets overall negative marks on handling of most issues, except for the environment, according to the poll. The highest disapproval — 58 percent — came on his handling of health care, as the rollout of the Afford-

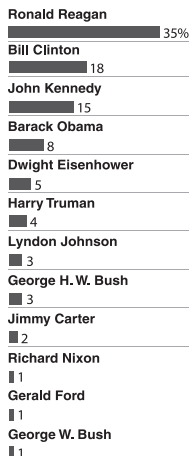
Best and worst presidents

How registered voters rank U.S. presidents since 1945, according to a new poll:

• The worst president



• The best president



NOTE: No response for Harry Truman, John Kennedy with "worst president" question.

SOURCE: Quinnipiac poll of 1,446 registered voters, June 24-30, 2014. Margin of error: +/- 2.6 percentage points

able Care Act continues to be controversial. Quinnipiac says it surveyed 1,446 registered voters nation-

wide by cellphone and land line June 24-30, and that the survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.6 percentage points.

JUDY TREMBLE/MCT

WORLD

Japan to lift some sanctions on N. Korea

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe took a tentative step toward improved relations with North Korea on Thursday by announcing his government will lift some of its sanctions in response to the North's decision to reopen a probe into the fate of at least a dozen Japanese believed to have been abducted from North Korean agents decades ago.

Abe said he was satisfied that a North Korean investigation committee has the mandate to carry out a serious investigation into the abductions, though previous deals with the North have fallen through. Japan will continue to abide by U.N. sanctions on North Korea over its nuclear and missile programs.

"We have determined that an unprecedented framework has been established, where an organization that can make decisions at a national level ... will be at the forefront of the investigations," Abe said. "However, this is only a start. We are determined to do everything we can, with a renewed effort, toward a comprehensive resolution."

US ship sails off to destroy Syrian weapons

GIOIA TAURO, Italy — A United States cargo vessel loaded with hundreds of tons of Syria's chemical weapons left an Italian port Wednesday to destroy the arms at sea as part of the international effort to rid Syria of its chemical weapon stockpile.

The MV Cape Ray steamed out of the southern Italian port of Gioia Tauro after a 12-hour operation to transfer the chemicals from a Danish ship, the Ark Futura.

It was heading into the open sea, where it will neutralize the chemicals — including mustard gas and the raw materials for sarin nerve gas — with special machinery outfitted in its cargo hold.

A statement issued Wednesday from the U.S. Defense Department said "neutralization operations will soon begin" in international waters and is expected to take several weeks to complete.

Toronto mayor says he has used 'every drug'

TORONTO — Toronto Mayor Rob Ford said Wednesday he's used "every drug you can probably think of" and blamed substance abuse for the racist and homophobic language he's used.

Ford returned to work this week after a two-month stay in rehab for drugs and alcohol. The mayor of Canada's largest city said he's used cocaine, marijuana and hallucinogenic mushrooms, but not heroin. He acknowledged he snorted crack but denied he was a crack addict.

"You name it, I've abused it," he said.

Ford refused to say whether he'd resign if he falls off the wagon again. Asked if that was good enough for the people of Toronto, Ford said it would be up to them to decide in the Oct. 27 election.

From The Associated Press

ISIL frees 32 Turkish truck drivers

By RYAN LUCAS
AND SUZAN FRASER
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Sunni militants Thursday released 32 Turkish truck drivers who were captured during a highway offensive across northern and western Iraq last month, Turkey's foreign minister said.

Speaking to reporters in Ankara, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said the truckers were heading toward Irbil, the capital of the semiautonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq, and would be flown later to Ankara.

The drivers were well, although one may need special treatment, he said, without elaborating or giving any details about their release.

Militants from the extremist group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant seized them June 9 in Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city. Three days later, they took another 49 people from the Turkish consulate in the city.

Davutoglu said efforts were underway to secure the release of the Turks still in captivity.

"The critical process continues," he said. "Our prayers and our efforts will go on for the rest of them and, God willing, we will share such good news about them too as soon as possible."

The militants' takeover of Mosul was the opening act of a bold offensive that has brought much of northern and western Iraq under their control. The assault has eased in recent days since encountering stiffer resistance in Shiite majority areas.

The rapid pace of the advance took the Iraqi government and the international community by surprise, as the country's military melted away in the face of the onslaught.

It also left 46 Indian nurses stranded at a hospital in the militant-held northern city of Tikrit. The nurses are safe but are being forced to move to a new area controlled by the militants, according to Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman Syed Akbaruddin.

He also said 40 Indian construction workers abducted two



AHMED AL-HUSSEINI/AP

Iraqi security forces celebrate Wednesday after clashes with followers of Shiite cleric Mahmoud al-Sarkhi in front of his home in the Shiite holy city of Karbala, 50 miles south of Baghdad.

weeks ago near Mosul were still being held but were unharmed.

The militant group's gains in Iraq add to the vast territory it already controls across the border in northern and eastern Syria. The fighters have pressed their offensive against pockets of rival rebel fighters still holding out against them in eastern Deir el-Zour province, which borders Iraq.

On Thursday, the militants barreled through towns and villages along the Euphrates River as rebel factions affiliated with tribes in the area gave up the fight.

Activists said the jihadi group is now in almost full control of a corridor stretching from the Syrian border town of Boukamal to the government-controlled provincial capital of Deir el-Zour to the northwest.

The moves consolidate the territory held by the group, which has shortened its name to the Islamic State.

Led by an ambitious Iraqi

militant known as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the group this week unilaterally declared the establishment of an Islamic state, or caliphate, in the lands it controls. It also proclaimed al-Baghdadi the head of its new, self-styled state governed by Shariah law and demanded that all Muslims pledge allegiance to him.

The majority of significant Syrian rebel groups that have been fighting to overthrow President Bashar Assad have rejected al-Baghdadi's declaration. The rebel groups, including the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front, have battled the Sunni extremist group since the beginning of the year. Nearly 7,000 people, mostly fighters, have died in the clashes.

However, the Nusra Front appears to be losing a war-within-a-war in Syria as fighters allied with powerful tribes in eastern Syria defect to al-Baghdadi's group.

On Thursday, activists posted a video showing a man in the town

of Shehel, a Nusra Front stronghold, reading a statement, saying, "We have decided to declare our allegiance to the Islamic State and the Caliph of the Muslims, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi."

Another video showed what appeared to be fighters in nearby Ishara saying they were ending their battle against al-Baghdadi's group.

"The clans of the city of Ishara, and the villages around it ... and all of the factions in these areas ... announce before God that they will cease fighting with the Islamic State," a man says, reading a statement in a courtyard with several other tribal elders. The videos appeared to be genuine and matched Associated Press reporting from the area.

The Deir el-Zour Coordination Committees, a collective of activists in the area, confirmed that militants had entered the town of Mayadeen and Ishara after other rebel fighters withdrew.

Buddhist-Muslim violence in Myanmar leaves 2 dead

The Associated Press

YANGON, Myanmar — Buddhist mobs on motorbikes drove through Myanmar's historic city of Mandalay in a second night of attacks on minority Muslims that left two people dead and 14 injured and raised fears of wider violence, officials said Thursday.

In response to the violence, authorities imposed a p.m. to 5-a.m. curfew, which was announced by cars mounted with loudspeakers cruising the tense city, according to residents contacted by phone.

The dead included a Muslim man, who residents said was on his way to a mosque before dawn Thursday when he was attacked

by the mob and left dead in the street. The second victim was a Buddhist man, whose cause of death was under investigation, a police officer said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media.

"More than 100 motorbikes drove through the city (Wednesday) night throwing stones at mosques and shouting abuses and singing the national anthem to taunt the Muslim people," said Win Mya Mya, a Muslim resident and senior member of the main opposition party, the National League for Democracy.

He and others blamed police for failing to control the Buddhist mobs.

Mandalay region chief minister Ye Myint told media that four people were arrested. He did not reveal the identities or the religions of the victims or of those detained for fear it might inflame the situation.

Myanmar, a predominantly Buddhist nation, has been grappling with violence since 2012 that has left up to 280 people dead and another 140,000 homeless, most of them Muslims attacked by Buddhist extremists. Most of the violence has taken place in western Rakhine state.

The government has faced international criticism for failing to act strongly to stop the violence, which in Rakhine state reported-

ly occurred in several cases as security forces looked on. So far, the government has not commented on the Mandalay attacks.

The latest outbreak that started Tuesday night was a first in Mandalay, in central Myanmar, the second-largest city and an important economic hub and center of Buddhist culture and learning where Muslims and Buddhists have traditionally lived peacefully together.

In a radio address Thursday, President Thein Sein raised the country's need for stability as it transitions to democracy from a half-century of military rule — but did not mention Mandalay specifically.

NATION



PHOTOS BY BEBETO MATTHEWS/AP

Dashawn Martin, center, a member of the dance troupe W.A.F.F.L.E. — which stands for We Are Family For Life Entertainment — performs on a subway in New York.

NYPD to subway acrobats: Sit down

BY JENNIFER PELTZ AND TOM HAYS

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The underground acrobats who flip, somersault and pole-dance among New York City subway riders as trains roll are drawing a new audience — police officers.

The New York Police Department is cracking down on the subway showmen who use the tight quarters of the nation's busiest transit system as moving stages for impromptu — and illegal — pass-the-hat performances. More than 240 people have been arrested on misdemeanors related to acrobatics so far this year, compared with fewer than 40 at this time a year ago.

Police Commissioner William Bratton acknowledged he is targeting subway acrobats as part of his embrace of the “broken windows” theory of policing — that low-grade lawlessness can cultivate a greater sense of disorder and embolden more dangerous offenders.

“Is it a significant crime? Certainly not,” Bratton said recently. The question is, he said, “Does it have the potential both for creating a level of fear as well as a level of risk that you want to deal with?”

The subway acrobats say they’re just out to entertain, make a living and put a little communal levity in New York’s no-eye-contact commuting.

“We all, as New Yorkers, get these force fields around us. We just try to go inside the train and change the vibe,” said a performer named Besnkheru, who, because of the crackdown, spoke on the condition that his full name not be used.

Hopping on and off trains one recent afternoon, Besnkheru sang to amplified recordings ranging from Michael Jackson to Latin jazz while his performance partner, Domingo, danced, clowned and used the car’s bars and poles like playground equipment. Sometimes, he dangled upside down with his head within a foot or two of a rider’s face.

The pair got some glares but many smiles — some from passengers who initially seemed determined not to look — and several dollars.

“It’s such a part of New York culture,” said rider Joli Tribuzio, an actress.



Above: Andrew Sanders, leader of W.A.F.F.L.E. speaks during an interview while acrobatic dancers work on routines in Union Square, New York.

Below: Marc Mack, 8, performs on a subway in New York.



‘We’re not just knuckleheads. ... We’re actually about something. There’s no reason for being locked up for doing what you love.’

Andrew “Goofy” Saunders

But other passengers resent becoming a captive audience for acrobats and break-dancers in a cramped subway car.

“I don’t like all that action right in front of my face,” rider Kesia Hudson said.

Police believe most riders agree with Hudson. And though no injuries have been reported, they also insist the showmanship is a safety issue.

“If the dancers make a mistake, someone could get hurt,” said Chief Joseph Fox, head of the NYPD’s Transit Bureau. “The dancers themselves could get hurt.”

Police have responded by studying passenger complaints to determine when and where to put plainclothes officers on trains to nab acrobats.

The arrests are usually uneventful but can turn nasty. An acrobat who was being arrested spit on one officer and tried to bite another.

“No matter how you look at it, it’s dangerous,” Fox said. “It’s dangerous for us, too.”

Two decades ago during Bratton’s previous stint as commissioner, his “broken windows” crackdowns targeted public drinking, panhandling and most notably the squeegee men who sprang out at intersections to wash the windshields.

This time, the department has targeted illegal motorcycles, graffiti — and the acrobats.

Andrew “Goofy” Saunders and some friends started doing routines on trains in 2007, hoping to make \$10 to enter a dance competition. Seven years later, the group — W.A.F.F.L.E., for We Are Family For Life Entertainment — has a shoe-brand sponsor and has been booked for music videos, parties, even a wedding.

“We’re not just knuckleheads. ... We’re actually about something,” said Saunders, 20.

The roughly 12-person troupe has largely stopped performing on subways because of the police attention. Members now hope to line up a public space to flip with permission.

“There’s no reason for being locked up for doing what you love,” Saunders said.

NATION

Fat camp for dogs?

Fitness programs offer pudgy pets 'pawlates,' 'doga' to slim down

By SUE MANNING
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — It's not just a people problem: Growing rates of obesity in pets have led to the emergence of fat farms offering "pawlates," "doga" and "Barko Polo," doggie versions of Pilates, yoga and Marco Polo, to help slim down man's best friend.

In the U.S., 53 percent of dogs are overweight or obese, up from 45 percent four years ago. In cats, the figure is almost 58 percent, said Dr. Ernie Ward, a veterinarian and founder of the Association of Pet Obesity Prevention in Calabash, N.C. Overweight pets can suffer diabetes, joint problems, heart disease and decreased life expectancy, just like obese people, he said.

Most luxury pet hotels and spas nationwide will customize a fitness program for a pudgy dog or cat, but only a few facilities have fat camps for large groups.

For golden retriever Ceili, it was easy to fatten up when living with a boy who pushed tasty morsels over the edge of his high chair. The extra weight led Eileen Bowers, of Bedminster, N.J., to sign up the more than 100-pound pooch for a five-day fitness camp last month at Morris Animal Inn.

53
The percentage of dogs that are overweight or obese in the U.S. up from 45 percent four years ago

Besides the "pawlates," the camp was filled with swimming, nature hikes, treadmill trots, facials, massages and healthy treats like organic granola, string beans and carrots. It was designed to give Ceili and 40 other dogs a head start on a healthier life, said Debora Montgomery, the New Jersey facility's spokeswoman.

Wonder how you get a dog to do a downward dog? You wouldn't even recognize that yoga pose in the canine version. "Doga" and "pawlates" are a lot alike — both are about stretching while building strength, balance and flexibility. In "doga," stretches are close to the ground, while "pawlates" uses higher balance equipment like large exercise balls, Montgomery said.

The "Barko Polo" pool game varies from its human inspiration: A staffer will shout "barko" and whichever dog-paddling pooch yelps first gets a toy.

In all activities, "the dogs work for their meals. We praise and make the sessions fun and interactive," Montgomery said.

After the cardio come the doggie facials: a cleansing massage that wipes away organic food crumbs and exercise-induced slobber.

Bowers started sending her dog to the Morris facility months ago when Ceili hit 126 pounds. Usually, female golden retrievers weigh between 55 and 70 pounds, Montgomery said. Ceili got down to 118 but went to camp to lose more.

Extra treats are a culprit in canine obesity rates, besides a lack of exercise, Ward said. More than 80 percent of owners give dogs two or more snacks a day.

He compared the rising problem to the same trend in kids. "Children and cats and dogs don't feed themselves," Ward said. "We treat our pets like children."



PHOTOS BY MEL EVANS/AP

Golden retriever Ceili, right, stands in a small pool with a friend in the play area for dogs at the Morris Animal Inn in Morristown, N.J.



Above: Kelli Quinones walks Ceili on a treadmill for dogs at the Morris Animal Inn. Overweight Ceili weighs 126 pounds.

Right: Ceili plays a game of "Barko Polo."

FAITH



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/AP

A demonstrator stands with the Bible outside the Supreme Court in Washington on Monday, awaiting the court's decision on the Hobby Lobby case. The Supreme Court said corporations can hold religious objections that allow them to opt out of the new health law requirement that they cover contraceptives for women.

Ruling exposes sharp divide among faith groups

By MICHELLE BOORSTEIN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — U.S. faith groups were starkly divided in their reaction to the Supreme Court's decision affirming the religious rights of corporations, with some seeing a narrow decision protecting the religious liberty of business owners and others seeing a profane intrusion into the beliefs of employees.

Traditional Christians and Jews in particular celebrated Monday's decision, which comes at a time when many feel conservative religious beliefs — especially around sexuality and marriage — are slipping in official status.

"Justice has prevailed," the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said in a statement. "We welcome the Supreme Court's decision to recognize that Americans can continue to follow their faith when they run a family business. ... Now is the time to redouble our efforts to build a culture that fully respects religious freedom."

"Hallelujah! #HobbyLobby" tweeted Russell Moore, leader of the Southern Baptist Convention's public address arm.

The Rev. Harry Knox, president of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, said business owners who feel their religious beliefs "are more important" than their female employees practice "nothing short of spiritual harassment."

"When it comes to matters of personal health, real religious liberty respects the discernment process each person enters into guided by their own faith values," Knox said.

The court's ruling was over the question of whether the Affordable Care Act violates the law by requiring for-profit corporations — including those owned by people

'No matter what they did the country will be unhappy.'

Doug Laycock
University of Virginia law professor

with religious objections — to provide employees no-cost contraception.

Most of the pending legal challenges to the health care mandate are in the nonprofit sector, to where attention quickly shifted Monday.

Dozens of faith-based schools, Catholic dioceses and religious charities are in court against the White House, also objecting to offering coverage.

Unlike with religious business owners, the White House has offered faith-based nonprofits the option of identifying themselves as conscientious objectors, thus putting the burden of providing contraception on their insurance companies.

But some nonprofits said that still entangled them in a system they view as immoral and akin to killing.

The question of what will happen to these many nonprofit cases is unfolding at the federal appeals court level.

Some groups that have worked closely with the White House urged the president to seek a compromise for the nonprofit standoff.

"We hope that, in light of the court's ruling, the Obama administration will now look to develop a new approach that will also allow the many pending lawsuits over religious liberty and the health care mandate to be settled," said a statement from the Orthodox Union, the largest advocacy group for Orthodox Jews.

Some faith groups saw a dangerous, broadly worded decision.

They pointed to the dissent written by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

What about "employers with religiously grounded objections to blood transfusions (Jehovah's Witnesses); antidepressants (Scientologists); medications derived from pigs, including anesthesia, intravenous fluids, and pills coated with gelatin (certain Muslims, Jews, and Hindus); and vaccinations[?]" . . . Not much help there for the lower courts bound by today's decision," she wrote.

"The First Amendment is at its best when it is used to protect the rights of minorities from the whims of the powerful. Today's decision, which gives the powerful the right to force their religious beliefs on those around them, is a far cry from the best traditions of religious freedom," wrote the Rev. Welton Gaddy, leader of the Interfaith Alliance.

Doug Laycock, a University of Virginia law professor who wrote a brief to the court supporting Hobby Lobby, said the idea of floodgates opening "is a scare tactic."

He saw the ruling as narrow and the case itself as "unusual," not one that would be applied to the big hot-button issues such as whether employers who reject same-sex marriage could claim religion in order to discriminate against gay customers, for example.

In fact, he thought the ruling threw a bone to both sides in a country in a culture war.

"No matter what they did the country will be unhappy," he said.

But the ruling showed "religious liberties can be protected, and we can have contraception and that may calm the waters," he said. "There is a way for both sides to live together and live according to their beliefs, and the court found it here."

It wasn't immediately clear how the ruling would be applied to the many pending nonprofit cases, which involve prominent religious organizations that include the University of Notre Dame and Wheaton College.

The ruling, in criticizing the government, noted that the White House hadn't offered as big an exemption to companies as it did to nonprofits, who can say they have an objection and trigger insurers to pay.

Some said that seemed to show the court found the exemption for nonprofits sufficient, while others said the basic argument for both groups is the same: Offering contraception violates some people's conscience.

Some faith-based groups sought a middle ground.

Among them was the progressive Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, which said in a statement that the decision "upholds the strong American tradition of protecting the religious liberty of the citizens of the United States."

"That being said, we remain committed to seeing the implementation of health care reform throughout the nation. We too believe that access to quality health care is a God-given right for all Americans."

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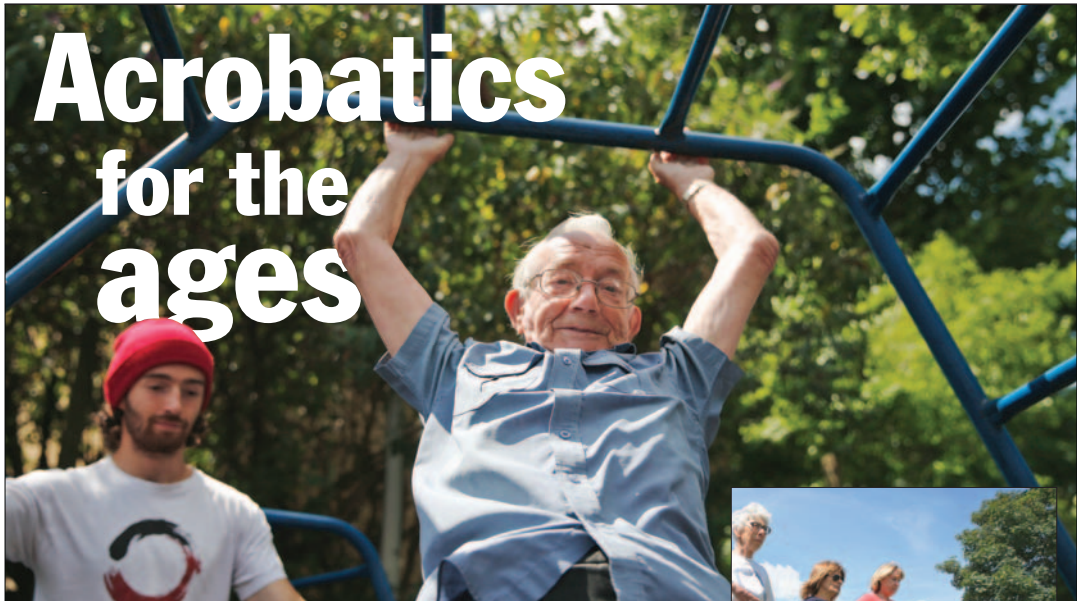
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WORLD



PHOTOS BY LEFTERIS PITRANIS/AP

Above: George Jackson, 85, an army veteran and former boxer, swings on monkey bars as he participates at a parkour class for elderly people at a park in south London. Jackson is the oldest participant in the unique weekly class for people over 60. Parkour, a flashy discipline usually known for its acrobatic running, climbing and gravity-defying jumps, was invented in the 1980s in France. **Right:** Participants work on balance.



Fitness class has seniors tackle modified version of parkour

By MARIA CHENG
The Associated Press

LONDON — On a recent morning in London, Lara Thomson practiced spinning on benches, swinging from metal bars and balancing off raised ledges — all elements of a daredevil discipline known as “parkour.”

What was unusual about the scene is that Thomson is 79 and all of her classmates are over 60.

They are members of a unique weekly class for seniors in a sport more commonly known for gravity-defying jumps than helping people with arthritis.

Invented in the 1980s in France, parkour is a sport usually favored by extremely nimble people who move freely through any terrain using their own strength and flexibility, often using urban environments such as benches, buildings and walls as a type of obstacle course. It’s also known as free running.

The London parkour class of about a dozen students is taught by two instructors who have adapted the sport’s main elements to a level that can be handled even by those

over 60 who have replacement joints or other medical conditions.

“I wondered whether it was a government plot to get rid of old people when I heard about the class,” Thomson joked.

She said she has balance problems and that the class helps her feel more confident about getting around. “Being able to get outside and do silly things like hugging trees is great,” she said, referring to a stretching exercise.

While most fitness classes aimed at seniors focus on calmer activities such as dance or yoga, experts say parkour is a reasonable, if unorthodox, option.

“When I first heard about this, I had a picture in my mind of elderly people jumping off of walls and I thought there was no way this could be appropriate,” said Bruce Paton, a physical therapist who works with the elderly at the Institute of Sport, Exercise and Health at University College London. He is not connected to the program. “But when you look at the things they’re doing, it’s actually quite gentle and could increase their strength and flexibility to help them with their daily activities.”

The parkour instructors said everyone who takes the class fills out a health form and they are particularly careful to dissuade participants from doing too much; several students have artificial joints, arthritis or a pacemaker.

“Every single technique in parkour can be changed so that anyone can do it,” said Jade Shaw, artistic director of Parkour Dance, who teaches the class. For now, the classes are free and held at a Tibetan Buddhist center in South London.

“I think it’s very beneficial and I’m hoping we’ll soon have a lot more older people bouncing around the parks,” she said.



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STARS AND STRIPES

WORLD

Flap over follicles

Tests show supposed 'Bigfoot' hair samples mostly from bears, wolves

By MARIA CHENG
The Associated Press

LONDON — DNA testing is taking a bite out of the Bigfoot legend. After scientists analyzed more than 30 hair samples reportedly left behind by Bigfoot and similar mythical beasts like the Himalayan Yeti, they found all of them came from more mundane creatures such as bears, wolves, cows and raccoons.

In 2012, researchers at Oxford University and the Lausanne Museum of Zoology issued an open call asking museums, scientists and Bigfoot aficionados to share any samples they thought were from the legendary ape-like creatures.

"I thought there was about a

'Every mammal in the forest leaves hair and poop behind and that's what we've found. Just not the big guy himself.'

Todd Disotell
professor of anthropology, New York University

5 percent chance of finding a sample from a Neanderthal or [a Yeti]," said Bryan Sykes, of Oxford University, who led the research, the first peer-reviewed study of Bigfoot, Yeti and other "anomalous primates." The study was published online Wednesday in the journal *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*.

Sykes and colleagues tested 36

hair samples from Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Russia and the U.S. using DNA sequencing and all of them matched DNA from known animals. Most were from bears, but there were also hairs from a Malaysian tapir, horses, porcupine, deer, sheep and a human.

While Sykes said they didn't find any proof of Bigfoot-related

creatures, he acknowledged their paper doesn't prove they don't exist.

"The fact that none of these samples turned out to be [a Yeti] doesn't mean the next one won't," he said.

The scientists did find two samples from ancient polar bears in the Himalayas, who are not known to live there. That suggests there could be a new or hybrid bear species out there, Sykes said.

Others said proving that Bigfoot is real requires significantly more than a mere hair sample.

"I would want visual or physical proof, like a body part, on top of the DNA evidence," said Todd Disotell, a professor of anthropology at New York University.

He warned Bigfoot enthusiasts not to make assumptions when they find weird things in the forest. "Every mammal in the forest leaves hair and poop behind and that's what we've found," he said. "Just not the big guy himself."

Some experts said that if Bigfoot existed, there would be a lot more to find than just a few errant hairs.

"Those who believe in the Yeti, Bigfoot and the Loch Ness Monster need basic instruction in sex," said Stuart Pimm, an ecologist at Duke University, in an email. "Each Yeti has two parents, four grandparents and so on," he said. "There should have been herds of [Yetis]," he wrote. "Where were they hiding?"



AP photos

Oxford University genetics professor Bryan Sykes shows a prepared DNA sample taken from hair from a Himalayan animal. Inset: In 2008, a media conference was held in Palo Alto, Calif., announcing the claim that a deceased bigfoot or sasquatch creature has been found in Georgia.

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FACES



Changing his tune

THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY/AP

Keira Knightley, left, and Adam Levine star in the movie "Begin Again." Levine says his acting debut in the film "Begin Again" has inspired him to continue acting. Levine, who fronts the band Maroon 5, identified with the part — a young musician who strikes it big.

Adam Levine makes movie debut in 'Begin Again'

BY JAKE COYLE
The Associated Press

Adam Levine knows pop stars-turned-actors are greeted suspiciously. And he's hesitant to make any grandiose declarations about suddenly transforming into an actor. But he also can't help himself.

Following his movie debut in the recently released "Begin Again," the Maroon 5 frontman is exuberant about a potentially budding movie career.

"It really made me fall in love," said Levine about "Begin Again" in a recent interview. "It's the very beginning of something really cool."

The transition is unusually seamless for Levine in "Begin Again," a naturalistic indie about musicians in New York by "Once" director John Carney. Levine plays an aspiring musician, the boyfriend to a singer-songwriter played by Keira Knightley. But it's his breakthrough that's brought them to New York, and his fast-growing fame pulls the couple apart.

"I had been through that before, maybe not the same version," says Levine of the tumult of sudden fame. "That's what connected

'That's what connected me to this guy. I immediately understood exactly what needed to be done with this character just based on my life's experience.'

Adam Levine
on his 'Begin Again' character

me to this guy. I immediately understood exactly what needed to be done with this character just based on my life's experience."

The 35-year-old Levine grew up in Los Angeles, so acting in movies was, he says, always "somewhere in the back of my mind." Carney approached him about the film and Levine jumped at the chance, working for little pay.

"I knew that I would try doing it," he says. "Because of the other wonderful things that have happened in my life and my career, I'd been given the opportunity to try it. I thought to myself, 'Well, I'm going to try it. I'm not going to not try it.'"

Levine, of course, is familiar with working in front of the camera. Aside from music videos for Maroon 5 and a cameo on "30 Rock," he's been a judge on NBC's "The Voice" since 2011. He also played an arc as a newlywed vis-

iting an insane asylum on FX's "American Horror Story" in 2012.

"He's so confident and he's such a natural entertainer and he's very comfortable on camera because he does that show and he's made lots of music videos," says Knightley. "He kept claiming he didn't know what he was doing, but it looked like he knew exactly what he was doing to me."

Though "Begin Again" represents a more substantial shift into acting for Levine, he drew heavily from his day job.

In one of the film's most moving scenes, Levine performs the original song "Lost Stars" while Knightley's character looks on. The song, which Levine wrote with former New Radicals frontman Gregg Alexander, will be pushed for an Oscar by the film's distributor, The Weinstein Company.

sponded — in a way Secor never expected.

The lead singer of Old Crow, whose new album "Remedy" came out Tuesday, likens his relationship with Dylan to a kid dropping letters in a bottle and tossing them in the ocean seeking a pen pal on another continent.

"The bottle washed ashore on the beach in Malibu and Bob scrawled something into the bottle and he tossed it back into the Pacific and it made its way to Music City," Secor said.

That response was another scrap of a song and a question: Would Secor want to take a crack at it?

The snippet comes from the same Mexico writing sessions as the "Wagon Wheel" song fragment Secor would later embellish, originally recorded for Dylan's 1973 soundtrack for "Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid."

"I was working with about 26 seconds in which there's a lot of giggling in the background and it just sounds like a pretty high time down in Monterey, or Durango, or

wherever they are making this Western movie," Secor said.

From that came "Sweet Amarillo," a waltz about a cowboy's search for his lover. After sending Dylan's management a demo, they received a short suggestion to move the chorus up and switch out the harmonica for a fiddle. "The reason it sounds so catchy is because Bob said play the fiddle and get a good hook in your music," Secor said. "That's what a good catchy song does. I think Bob is rooting for it, too."

Lohan sues over video game

The Associated Press

Lindsay Lohan is suing the makers of the "Grand Theft Auto" video games. The actress says the latest installment used her image and created a character based on her without her permission.

Lohan's lawsuit was filed Wednesday in a Manhattan, N.Y., court. "Grand Theft Auto V" game maker Take-Two Interactive Software Inc. and subsidiary Rockstar Games declined to comment.

"Grand Theft Auto V" was released in September.

Lohan's lawsuit says a character named Lacey Jones is an "unquivocal" reference to the "Mean Girls" and "Freaky Friday" star.

Other news

■ Singer Jewel and her husband are divorcing after a 16-year relationship. The 40-year-old writes in a letter posted on her website that she and Ty Murray want their separation "to be nothing less loving than the way we came together." A representative for the singer confirmed the news Wednesday. Jewel and Murray were married in 1998. They have a son.

■ Burt Reynolds, the actor

who once showed all, is now ready to tell all. G.P. Putnam's Sons announced Wednesday that Reynolds' memoir, "But Enough About Me," is set for release in fall 2015. The 78-year-old Reynolds promises in a statement to "set the record straight" on everything from his love affairs with Sally Field and Loni Anderson to his Cosmopolitan centerfold from 1972.

■ An actor best known from the 1960s sitcom "McHale's Navy" has died. Bob Hastings was 89. Allison Knowles says her grandfather died Monday in his Burbank, Calif., home after a lengthy battle with prostate cancer. Hastings won fans on "McHale's Navy" as Lt. Carpenter, a bumbling yes-man. Other memorable roles were on "All in the Family" and "General Hospital."

■ Walter Dean Myers, a bestselling and prolific children's author and tireless champion of literacy and education, has died. He was 76. Myers, a longtime resident of Jersey City, N.J., died Tuesday at Beth Israel Medical Center in Manhattan after a brief illness, publisher HarperCollins announced. He completed more than 100 books, his notable works including "Monster" and "Lockdown."

Pop singer set for awards show

Ariana Grande will perform at the MTV Video Music Awards on Aug. 24, MTV announced Wednesday.

She is the first performer for the awards show, which will air live from the Forum in Inglewood, Calif.

Grande's current single, "Problem," has reached double platinum status and peaked at No. 2 on Billboard's Hot 100 chart.

The 20-year-old Grande will release her sophomore album, "My Everything," a day after the VMAs.

From The Associated Press



Old Crow Medicine Show teams with Bob Dylan again

BY KRISTIN M. HALL
The Associated Press

For years, Ketch Secor of Old Crow Medicine Show has been thanking Bob Dylan from afar for "Wagon Wheel," the multiplatinum hit based on an unfinished Dylan song. The Americana band made it a fan favorite through their live shows over the past decade, and then Darius Rucker turned a cover into a No. 1 country song.

The reclusive master songwriter re-

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man dies after refusing to spit out crack

TX BEAUMONT — Police said a driver in a Southeast Texas traffic stop died after allegedly swallowing crack cocaine and refusing to spit it out.

Beaumont police said the man died early Wednesday. The name of the 32-year-old Beaumont man wasn't immediately released. An autopsy has been ordered.

Police on Tuesday night conducted a traffic stop and approached a car carrying four people. Officers saw a passenger drop something that turned out to be a crack cocaine pipe. Officers then noticed the driver had something in his mouth and refused to spit it out.

A struggle ensued and the man swallowed which police say appeared to be crack cocaine.

The driver was transported to a hospital but he refused treatment, then had a seizure and died as medical personnel tried to save him.

4,000 arrive for forest counterculture fest

UT UINTA NATIONAL FOREST — About 4,000 members of a counterculture group known as the Rainbow Family have poured into the woods about 60 miles east of Salt Lake City. The annual festival culminates in a four-day celebration that began Tuesday.

The group counts no leaders or official members. Last year, it set up camp in a part of Montana national forest.

Members began arriving in the forest in recent weeks, flooding neighboring Heber City, where residents question how much the gathering will cost their town.

Authorities said two participants at the celebration apparently died in their sleep. They also said a New Mexico woman at the camp site last week stabbed a participant, seriously injuring him.

About 10,000 people are expected to arrive by Friday, the height of the celebration.

Referee punched at soccer match dies

MI DETROIT — A man who was punched in the head over the weekend while refereeing an adult-league soccer match in suburban Detroit died Tuesday, authorities said.

John Bieniewicz, 44, who was attacked Sunday at a park in Livonia, died at Detroit Receiving Hospital, said hospital spokesman Alton Gunn, Livonia police and the man's longtime friend, Jim Acho.

Police Lt. Tom Goralski said Baseel Abdul-Amir Saad, 36, of Dearborn, punched Bieniewicz in the head after the referee indicated he planned to eject the man from the game. He was arraigned Monday on a charge of assault with intent to do great bodily harm. The Wayne County prosecutor's office said the charges would be reviewed and possibly amended when it had the necessary documentation.

THE CENSUS

\$400K

The sale price for a small southwestern South Dakota town that went on the market last week. The unincorporated hamlet is owned by businessman Lance Benson, who still lives there with his wife. He said the town used to have a population of 40 people decades ago, as well as a post office, a few houses and a grocery store. Now, the town is just a bar, workshop, three trailers and a house. Benson has owned it since 1998.



DAWN J. SAGERT, SIOUX CITY (IOWA) JOURNAL/AP

Ham on the lam

A man tries to catch a piglet belonging to Derek Heeren, of Akron, after it jumped from its kennel in the bed of a pickup truck while traveling north, causing traffic to slow along Highway 29 near the Riverside Drive exit in Sioux City, Iowa, on Tuesday. The pig was eventually caught, and traffic resumed to normal without incident.

Sailors rescue woman from burning home

VA NEWPORT NEWS — A Newport News woman was rescued out of her home by a pair of Navy sailors Tuesday morning, a Newport News Fire Department spokesman and Navy officials said.

Local dispatchers received initial reports of a house fire just after 11:20 a.m., Newport News Fire Department spokesman Stephen Pincus said.

Before local firefighters arrived, two sailors from the USS Abraham Lincoln on their lunch break saw smoke coming from the area and found that the porch of the home was on fire, Pincus said.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 2nd Class Devon Bishop and Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 3rd Class Jessica Jusino entered through a side door, pushed past a freezer that was blocking a bolted door, and found the woman screaming, thinking she was being burglarized, according to a news release from USS Abraham Lincoln officials.

"After we told her that her

house was on fire and that we were there to help, we helped her out of the house through the back door," Bishop said in the news release. "Just up and I then grabbed her walker and took her to the backyard."

Firefighters arrived shortly afterward and declared the fire under control in about 10 minutes.

Lawsuit: Inmate tried to buy influence

CT NEW HAVEN — A former driver for an imprisoned hedge-fund founder says he was asked to help funnel money from his former boss to other inmates at a federal prison in Massachusetts.

The allegations are contained in a lawsuit filed June 20 by the driver, Peter Malaszk, against Raj Rajaratnam in U.S. District Court.

Rajaratnam, founder of the Galleon Group, is serving an 11-year sentence for insider trading at a minimum-security facility in Ayer, Mass.

Malaszk alleges Rajaratnam gave him names and contact information for the family members of inmates who were to receive money. He said the cash was meant to secure special treatment in prison for Rajaratnam.

Terence Lynan, Rajaratnam's attorney, said the allegations are false and part of an effort to extort money.

Gnanny arrested after toddler drinks meth tea

CA IDYLLWILD — Authorities in Southern California said a 51-year-old woman was arrested after her 2-year-old granddaughter drank tea with methamphetamine in it. A Riverside County sheriff's statement said the toddler's mother called authorities Monday saying the child had not slept and was talking rapidly, scratching and couldn't sit still.

At a hospital, it was determined she had meth in her system. Investigators said the grandmother, Cynthia Watson, made a cup of tea the night before and put meth in it "to get herself high." The girl apparently drank it when the cup was unattended.

Watson, who was visiting from Oregon, was held on suspicion of child endangerment on \$35,000 bail.

The toddler is expected to make a full recovery.

Man gets prison for bomb-making materials

ID BOISE — A Boise man who pleaded guilty to having bomb-making materials in the crawlspace of his house has been sentenced to 13 to 25 years in prison.

Joshua Finch, 33, told investigators he believed an electromagnetic pulse was going to knock out all of the electronics in the country and he was preparing for the anarchy he believed would follow. He had explosives, pipes and timing devices under his house, along with an assault rifle, prosecutors said.

"I know all this looks really bad, but I wasn't trying to hurt anyone," Finch told District Judge Thomas Neville on Monday.

Neville countered that having more than 100 pounds of explosives in a crawl space underneath his children's bedrooms wasn't consistent with that claim.

"This was not about protecting your family, Mr. Finch," Neville said. "You were endangering your family by the actions you took."

From wire reports

US employers added 288K jobs in June

Still, economists at the liberal Economic Policy Institute estimate that 7 million more jobs would have been needed to keep up with population growth.

Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3771
British pound sterling	\$1.7146/0.5832
Canada (Dollar)	1.0674
China (Yuan)	6.2120
Denmark (Krone)	5.4806
Dracma (Pound)	7.1569
Euro	\$1.3670/0.7359
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7511
Hungary (Forint)	228.53
Israeli (Shekel)	3.4208
Japan (Yen)	102.27
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2821
Norway (Krone)	6.2136
Peso (Peseta)	43.61
Poland (Zloty)	3.04
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7506
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2475
South Korea (Won)	1,009.52
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8942
Thailand (Baht)	32.42

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.04
30-year bond	3.46

CHINA

RUSSIA

N. KOREA

S. KOREA

JAPAN

Philippine Sea

Sea of Japan

Pacific Ocean

Seoul 90/67

Osan 90/62

Busan 78/67

Sasebo 75/68

Iwakuni 81/68

Tokyo 81/68

Misawa 69/60

Okinawa 86/80

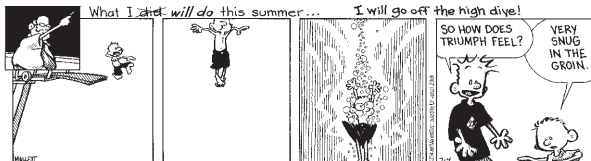
Guam 84/80

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

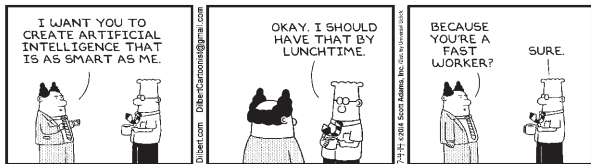
Chy	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Chattanooga	62	62	Cy	Fort Wayne	74	51	Cy	Louisville	80	61	Cy	Pocatello	94	58	Cy	Sious City	81	59	Cy
Ablene, Tex	93	71	PCldy	Cheyenne	89	57	PCldy	Fresno	103	69	Cy	Lubbock	92	67	PCldy	Portland, Maine	77	67	Cy	Sious Falls	80	60	Cy
Albany, N.Y.	79	67	Cld	Cincinnati	77	53	Cy	Grand Junction	95	66	PCldy	Madison	77	53	Cy	Providence	79	70	Cy	South Bend	72	63	Cy
Albuquerque	90	67	PCldy	Cleveland	73	54	Cy	Grand Rapids	76	52	PCldy	Medford	93	58	Cy	Pueblo	97	70	Cy	Springfield, Ill	79	56	Cy
Albion, Pa.	79	67	Cld	Colorado Springs	54	54	PCldy	Greenville	57	57	PCldy	Memphis	89	63	PCldy	North Durham	88	63	PCldy	Springfield, Mo	84	53	Cy
Amarillo	90	64	Cy	Columbia, S.C.	90	73	PCldy	Green Bay	76	52	PCldy	Miami Beach	89	78	PCldy	Reno	89	62	PCldy	Syracuse	73	60	Cy
Anchorage	73	53	PCldy	Columbus, Ga.	90	67	Cy	Greensboro, N.C.	84	67	PCldy	Midland-Odesa	84	69	PCldy	Rejo City	89	63	Cy	Tallahassee	97	70	PCldy
Ann Arbor	81	67	Cy	Cashville	78	64	Cy	Harrisburg	74	54	Cy	Minneapolis	89	63	PCldy	Richmond	89	63	Cy	Tucson	89	60	Cy
Atlanta	87	65	Cy	Concord, N.H.	78	68	Cy	Hartford Spfld	89	78	Cy	Mpls-St Paul	78	58	PCldy	Roanoke	82	64	Cy	Toledo	75	51	Cy
Austin	91	72	Cy	Corpus Christi	78	63	Cy	Honolulu	89	75	Cy	Mobile	73	62	PCldy	Rockford	79	52	PCldy	Topeka	85	60	Cy
Baltimore	83	69	Cy	Dayton	76	51	Cy	Houston	87	77	Cy	Montgomery	89	66	Cy	Sacramento	90	61	Cy	Tulsa	80	64	PCldy
Batimore	83	69	Cy	Dayton	76	51	Cy	Huntsville	76	51	Cy	Chattanooga	76	51	Cy	St Louis	81	63	Cy	Tulsa	80	64	PCldy
Billings	95	63	PCldy	Denver	92	62	PCldy	Indianapolis	77	56	Cy	New Orleans	90	76	Cy	St Petersburg	90	82	Cy	Tulsa	80	64	PCldy
Birmingham	85	62	Cy	Des Moines	79	57	PCldy	Jackson, Miss.	88	64	Cy	New York City	80	73	Cy	St Thomas	89	79	PCldy	Washington	72	83	71
Bismarck	92	64	Cy	Des Moines	79	57	PCldy	Detroit	60	50	Cy	Jackonville	87	61	Cy	Salem	79	69	Cy	W. Palm Beach	90	77	PCldy
Boise	92	64	Cy	Duluth	74	51	Cy	Juneau	56	52	Cy	Rain	83	75	Cy	Rain	83	75	Cy	Wichita	88	64	Cy
Boston	78	70	Rain	El Paso	95	77	PCldy	Kansas City	82	59	PCldy	Kansas City	82	59	PCldy	San Angelo	97	69	PCldy	Wichita Falls	95	70	PCldy
Boulder	92	64	Cy	Bridgeport	75	56	Cy	Rain	83	75	Cy	Key West	82	62	PCldy	San Antonio	97	69	PCldy	Wilkes-Barre	75	63	Cy
Brownsville	93	75	Cy	Erie	92	76	PCldy	Chattanooga	83	60	Cy	Omaha	86	60	PCldy	San Diego	77	67	PCldy	Yakima	83	54	Cy
Buffalo	79	67	Cy	Evansville	80	56	Cy	Chattanooga	79	56	Cy	Paducah	82	57	Cy	San Jose	81	57	Cy	Youngstown	74	51	Cy
Burlington, Vt.	75	64	Cy	Evansville	80	56	Cy	Lansing	75	51	Cy	Paducah	82	57	Cy	San Jose	81	57	Cy	Youngstown	74	51	Cy
Burlington, Maine	73	66	Rain	Fairbanks	78	54	Cy	Las Vegas	105	86	PCldy	Pendleton	85	56	Cy	San Francisco	86	59	Cy	Youngstown	74	51	Cy
Casper	92	64	Cy	Fargo	92	64	Cy	Phoenix	76	51	Cy	Phoenix	89	69	Cy	Seattle	73	73	Cy	Youngstown	74	51	Cy
Charleston, S.C.	93	74	PCldy	Flagstaff	79	52	Rain	Lincoln	85	60	Cy	Philadelphia	70	70									

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

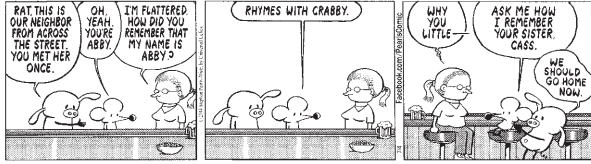
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



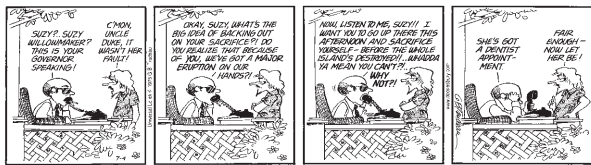
Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14				
15				16				17				
18				19								
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31	32	33						34				
35					36		37					
38					39	40			41	42	43	44
				45				46		47		
48	49	50	51									
53							54				55	
56							57				58	

ACROSS

- More, to Manuela
- Ag't's cut
- Capacitance measure
- Way back when
- "That feels good"
- Not just plump
- Skedaddled
- Ornate frame
- Masseur's workplace
- Massage
- Flavor enhancer
- Hair product
- Tammany Tiger creator
- Regret
- Tight-fitting hat
- Footballer Michael
- Winning
- Brunch entree
- Bat stat
- Hook henchman
- X-ray descendant
- Little branch
- Hit
- Commotion
- Upper lip adornment
- Distant
- Deck out
- Family
- Definite article
- Scope
- Harden
- Turf

DOWN

- Swamp
- Open-mouthed
- Sub detector
- Prepare to travel
- Alter
- Afternoon hour
- Comestibles
- Dhabi
- Fun and games
- Blond shade
- Scottish river
- Body powder
- Vaudeville's Fanny
- Like a perfect game
- Expert
- Na Na
- One of the Kennedys
- Granite State sch.
- "Bones" setting
- Mensa numbers
- Piratic potato
- Compte
- Watson or Stone fixtures
- Floats lightly
- Gem State
- Wounded in the bulging
- Eyelid problem
- Superman's alter ego
- Scratch
- Man-mouse link
- Coffee shop vessel
- Succumb to gravity

Answer to Previous Puzzle

P	O	D		S	P	A	M		S	A	I	L
A	W	E		I	O	N	A		A	P	S	E
D	E	M	O	C	R	A	T		M	E	L	T
		O	R	K		X	E	R	O	X	E	S
	L	O	N	E	L		D	I	V			
	O	B	I		E	A	R		B	A	D	G
	L	I	Z	A		M	O	B		R	E	L
	L	E	E	D		S		B	O	B		M
			V	I	C			A	L	L	O	W
	C	A	M	E	R	A	S		O	I	L	
	O	A	M	A	R		D	E	M	O	N	
	A	M	I	S		E	G	A	D		S	U
	L	O	D	E		T	O	N			H	I

7-4

CRYPTOQUIP

AVL FSWV ECTBSE BAHJC
 SPAWK S FCXOJCKEK ZJXC
 KGSK TAXC CHCXPALR AWK:

"KGC KJXJEM JEZCXEA."
 Yesterday's Cryptquip: SEVERAL CATS PATIENTLY WAITING TO PAY OFF THEIR SERVICE CHARGES WERE IN A FELINE FEE LINE.
 Today's Cryptquip Clue: K equals T

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Ernie Gates

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stripes.com

OPINION

Hiring the veteran not the only step

By HARRY CROFT and SYDNEY SAVION

On the backdrop of a sky filled with colorful fireworks and streets crowded with animated parades celebrating the Fourth of July, what emerges in the minds of many is the deliberation and decision of our Founders to pen and defend the Declaration of Independence. That was pen-to-paper, and then the real work and battle had to begin to realize the landscape we now call the United States of America.

What comes to mind for others on the backdrop of commemorating July 4, 1776, an epic day in history, is the battle that rages on in Iraq. Veterans who have volunteered to fight, whether in the name of duty or honor, watch as nearly 12 years of grueling battle for groundbreaking democracy comes unraveled, seemingly in the blink of an eye. Now veterans are in the fog on the return on investment for their battle wounds and scars.

In many ways, companies face a similar story in their effort to hire and train veterans, only to see their investment unravel in the form of high veteran attrition and turnover. While hiring a veteran is patriotic, giving veterans unemployment a rate higher than their civilian counterparts, the Catch-22 is hiring has to be balanced with a business need.

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the current trend among veterans is to change jobs twice within the first three years of civilian employment. Add to that attrition costs for a professional who quits averages \$125,000 for up to 18 months' salary. For hourly waged employees it averages a half-year's pay. This has left companies in the fog on what to do to

increase veteran satisfaction, productivity and retention.

It is widely known that the change from military to civilian life can prove quite challenging for many separating veterans. But oftentimes companies are unaware of what is necessary to onboard a veteran and retain him.

Simply put, individuals who separate or retire from the military and return to civilian life exchange structured society for an unstructured mainstream society. They face a major change in their life situation; therefore, veterans are confronted with learning to acclimate to a change in culture and a new beginning in life and work.

In addition to a change in employment status, from employed to unemployed or underemployed and underpaid, veterans are challenged with extraordinary differences in culture. This culture change presents them with mental and emotional struggles and, for many, that is coupled with a psychological struggle. This struggle is heightened for those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Even with the Department of Defense's new Veterans Transition Assistance Program, when a veteran returns to civilian culture he is wholly responsible for his own preservation and behavior. Veterans must learn to resocialize themselves and become fit for living in mainstream society. For companies, it only stands to reason that understanding the stark contrast between the two cultures can prove equally as daunting when attempting to hire, reintegrate and sustain veterans in the workplace.

By all accounts, veterans have the capacity — and should be able to effectively

retrain themselves — to operate in an environment other than that in which they were accustomed to being successful. For both veterans and employers, that outcome remains foggy at best.

That is exactly why coming into the light requires more than recruiting and hiring veterans. It requires effective onboarding and organizational development. In the interest of being a viable part of the solution to employing, retaining and celebrating America's veterans, companies need to develop an onboarding assimilation plan that gradually integrates veterans into the civilian work environment. Starting with Day One, the plan should focus on natural assimilation and inclusivity. Firms should adopt best practices such as establishing affinity groups, peer support and mentoring. That connects veterans with someone who can empathize with their concerns, while motivating and helping them adapt to and stay engaged in the work environment.

Firms also should customize the diversity and employee assistance programs to include veteran-specific education and support, and retain the services of a military-relations professional to facilitate ease of transition. The assimilation plan and its effective implementation are vital to veteran employment, sustainability and companies coming out of the fog and into the light of lower attrition, increased veteran satisfaction and productivity.

Harry Croft, a psychiatrist, has seen 7000 war veterans diagnosed with PTSD at the "11A Swifts with My Back to The Wall: Managing Combat Stress and PTSD," Sydney Savion, a retired military officer, is an allied behavioral scientist and author of "Camouflage to Pinstripes: Learning to Thrive in Civilian Culture."

Create a Department of Veterans Advocacy

By MARTIN SCHRAM

McClatchy-Tribune News Service

MEMO TO: Veterans Affairs Secretary-designate Robert A. McDonald

RE: The VA's crisis is even worse than you think

Your good news is that the White House, Congress and Department of Veterans Affairs are no longer in denial about the reality that things have gone terribly wrong in the VA hospitals. Indeed, all America finally knows the systemic shame of VA hospitals' treatment delays, faked records and coverups.

And apparently, the monstrous job of fixing the VA is yours. Republicans are praising your experience as Procter & Gamble's CEO. Your Senate confirmation seems assured.

But the publicly released summary of White House deputy chief of staff Rob Nabors' excellent tough-truth VA report to the president and me last month says VA hospitals, leaves one major concern: Your new bosses probably still haven't grasped the full breadth, depth and pervasiveness of all that was allowed to go so wrong, for so long, at the VA.

VA pension and benefits claims bureaucracies are failing our military veterans and their families. The VA is ineptly failing the backlogged VA hospitals are.

Pensions. Bill, a severely wounded World War II veteran, had a postwar career in the post office. When he died in January 2011, his widow, Diane, simultaneously sent the VA and U.S. Postal Service all the vital documents, requesting her share of both pensions as Bill's surviving spouse.

The USPS immediately calculated Diane's pension share and her first check ar-

rived when Bill's would have, in February. But half a year went by without a VA pension check. As her living expenses mounted, the VA asked for documents she'd already sent. I'd heard of Diane's plight, asked a VA official about it; Diane got a phone call from the VA the next day. Diane's first VA pension check arrived in August.

I asked a top VA official why the VA couldn't simply do what the USPS did for the widow. The official launched into a long explanation about VA lawyers and the need to determine if Bill died due to old war injuries, which would mean a larger pension. So I naturally asked: Couldn't the VA instantly pay her the base pension? And then pay her more, retroactively, if it proved to be a service injury death?

The VA official's eyes widened, he slapped his palm down on the conference table, then scribbled a note to himself. Yes, he said, that's a better way to do it. He's a good person; but his managerial mind has been shaped by the VA's cultural mindset. Changing that mindset is the new VA secretary's most urgent challenge.

Benefits. When VA claim adjudicators issue denials — as they often do — an appeals process begins. The appeals court remains some 60 percent of the time denies back to the adjudicators for reconsideration due to one mistake or another. And it all starts over again. The top level appeals court has ruled the denials of the VA adjudicators and next level board of appeals were right in a mere 24 percent of the cases that got to the court. No wonder the VA's benefits claim backlog was recently reported to be one million.

Hospitals. Here's a proposal — give veterans a Vet-Med card that works like a Medicare card, and pays for treatment

where service is best and waiting times are brief. Not all hospitals need to provide top-level treatment for all maladies. In cities, some hospitals send major cardiac and cancer cases to another hospital specializing in those problems.

At the start of the Obama presidency, I sought to persuade the new VA secretary, retired Gen. Eric Shinseki, to focus on the full scope of VA failings. I'd just written a book chronicling sad cases of VA delays and denials of benefits and treatment. But back then Shinseki was in denial about what the book — titled "Vets Under Siege: How America Deceives and Dishonors Those Who Fight Our Battles" — was warning.

Back then he didn't believe the subtitle. And especially, he probably didn't grasp the validity of my conclusion that an adversarial mindset had permeated the VA. Too many employees saw their jobs as assuring veterans didn't get benefits they didn't deserve. I urged that VA employees must see themselves first as veterans' advocates, tasked with what they'd earned. Nothing more, but surely nothing less.

Even in his last days on the job, Shinseki told Congress there were only a "limited" number of "isolated" cases where VA hospitals falsified delay records. Only in his last hours did the four-star general admit he'd been deceived by a "systemic ... overarching environment and culture" within the VA.

There is one way our new bold VA secretary can change the VA mindset — by changing the VA's name. Let all VA employees know, first and foremost, they now work for the Department of Veterans Advocacy.

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for McClatchy-Tribune, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Arnett again on point on war Aniston (Ala.) Star

If Baghdad is indeed becoming Saigon — a city overrun by opposition and violence after the departure of the U.S. military — Peter Arnett would know.

He intimately knows both places. Working for The Associated Press, Arnett won the Pulitzer Prize in 1966 for his reporting from Vietnam. In the spring of 1975, Arnett witnessed the calamity that ensued when U.S. personnel abandoned Saigon just as North Vietnamese forces were overtaking the city. In the 1990s, Arnett became a household name to a new generation of Americans following his blow-by-blow coverage of the first Gulf War on CNN.

Arnett, now retired as a foreign correspondent, wrote in Monday's Washington Post that a Saigon-like future "may be the fate that awaits Baghdad if the march of [the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] continues." The Sunni insurgency has already captured much of Iraq's north (much as the Vietcong had) and is steadily pushing southward. If it reaches the city, what I saw unfold in Saigon nearly 40 years ago is probably a good proxy for what to expect."

The picture Arnett paints is one dripping in pessimism, and understandably so. The ISIL is a jihadist militant group that's systematically taking control of wide swaths of those nations. Bloodshed is ubiquitous, the death toll rising. President Barack Obama has sent military advisers and a few hundred troops to Baghdad to protect U.S. interests, including the embassy and its personnel.

Whatever unsteady peace brought through America's yearlong involvement in that Middle Eastern nation is rapidly dissolving.

Arnett admits that "crucial differences separate Vietnam and Iraq," most notably the existence of three groups — the Shites, Sunnis and Kurds — who, as Arnett so bluntly puts it, "no longer wish to live with in the antiquated borders devised by European diplomats 100 years ago." Vietnam doesn't suffer from that internal struggle of religion and violence.

A smattering of U.S. troops can't glue together what's coming apart in Baghdad. Arnett's prediction of Iraq's future may be more proof of the Iraq War's undeniable folly.

Ex-Im Bank's mission valuable The Miami Herald

Given the multitude of problems facing the United States, it's appalling to see private members of Congress focusing on the U.S. Export-Import Bank as a target of opportunity. Why has a useful government agency that works exactly as intended suddenly become a political football?

Relatively few Americans have heard of the Ex-Im Bank, or its purpose, but ever since creation under Franklin Roosevelt, the agency has been a critical force behind the success of American businesses competing in overseas markets.

Its role is twofold. It provides export credit insurance so that U.S. companies selling made-in-America goods abroad have protection against U.S. foreign business overseas. And it provides financing for foreign buyers purchasing American-made goods. For obvious reasons, this is not a role that private banks are eager to play. The risks are deemed too great for a private institution, whereas a government agency has the clout and the means to act overseas.



CONOR RADNOVIC/AP

A crowd applauds Freedom Rider Charles Person as he walks toward the buses that will drive him and more than other 100 people to Richmond, Va., to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Civil Rights Act on Wednesday in Washington.

Its services are not free. The agency charges fees and interest, like any other bank — and regularly produces an annual profit. Last year, it helped reduce the U.S. deficit by \$1 billion.

So why in the world would incoming House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., and other like-minded Republicans zero in on the Ex-Im Bank for extinction? The short answer is that they see it as an enabler of "crony capitalism," helping big businesses like Boeing, Caterpillar and GE that should not have to rely on the full faith and credit of the U.S. government to make a profit.

That, at best, is a weak argument. Then, too, there is the argument that the Ex-Im Bank does not so much create jobs as help to allocate them, that it chooses "winners and losers" in deciding where to lend assistance. Tell that to the more than 200,000-plus American workers who owed their jobs to bank-supported exports in the last fiscal year. ...

The agency's charter expires on Sept. 30. Destroying the Ex-Im Bank would amount to a form of unilateral disarmament in the contest over international trade. Surely lawmakers can stop their incessant feuding and ideological warfare long enough to renew its authority to stay in business before any American jobs are lost.

No likes for Facebook tactics Los Angeles Times

Facebook is an extraordinary tool, but its pitfalls have become increasingly apparent. Users' personal information, interests and habits are all fair game for the company, which has little compunction about analyzing the data and selling them to advertisers. Now Facebook has gone beyond capitalism and into creepy. For a week in 2012, it seems, the company manipulated users' news feeds as part of a psychology experiment to see whether happier or sadder content led users to write happier or sadder posts. The result? Facebook appears to have altered people's emotional states without their awareness.

This was wrong on multiple levels. It was unethical for Facebook to conduct a psychological experiment without users' informed consent. And it was especially wrong to do so in a way that played with the emotions of its users. That's dangerous territory.

Facebook, which employs a secret algorithm to determine what users see on their news feeds, conducted its research by altering the feeds of some 700,000 users, increasing or decreasing the number of "positive" and "negative" messages they saw to study the "emotional contagion" of social media. The company, together with two academic researchers, published

the results last month in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. In the study, Facebook asserted that users had given informed consent, which is standard protocol in psychological research, when they agreed to the company's terms of service, which caution that users' data can be mined for analysis and research. But that's disingenuous. It's hard to believe that users who took the time to read Facebook's 13,000-word service agreements would have understood they were signing on to be lab rats.

In response to the outrage, the Facebook researcher who designed the study apologized for "any anxiety it caused." He added that the company will seek to improve its internal review practices for future research. Certainly Facebook needs to revisit its policies to ensure that its users are not unwitting participants in psychological research. If this research is so valuable, the company should seek true informed consent.

But Facebook also needs to address its cavalier attitude toward its users. This latest controversy sends a troubling message to users that their personal information, their online activities and now even their feelings are all data points to be analyzed and manipulated according to the whims of a giant corporate machine.

Stop trips well before border Chicago Tribune

The desire of parents to give their children a safer, better life is leading mothers and fathers in the violence-wracked Central American countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras to take terrible risks. By the thousands, they are turning over their kids — many of them teenagers but others as young as 4 — to smugglers, praying they'll get through Mexico and into the United States.

Once here, mainly in Texas, the kids — several hundred of them every day — are picked up by the U.S. Border Patrol and detained temporarily in military bases and other government facilities. Meanwhile, the Obama administration, Congress and immigration advocates debate what to do. These are children, alone in a foreign country, frightened and confused, now wards of a legal system ill-equipped to shelter minors.

America hasn't solved immigration reform, and it won't happen this year, leaving the overall system a mess.

Central Americans are taken into our overburdened immigration system, held for a time and then pushed out to family members or foster care to await a distantly scheduled immigration court hearing. Some of them appear at those hearings, maybe they don't.

This gives you an idea of both the state of the immigration system and the challenge presented by all these children. The overall system is already clogged with more than 360,000 cases, according to Syracuse University researchers.

The coyotes — smugglers, often connected to the drug trade — have a good story to tell: American immigration is letting children into the country these days. The sales pitch is based on lies and misinformation, including the misstatement of a grace program available to some children who arrived in the U.S. in 2007 or earlier.

First, spread the word to Central America ... that there is no successful smuggling route into the U.S. There is only danger for children, followed by a traumatizing stay in a government holding center and then deportation. ...

Second: Ramp up special court proceedings, apart from the already overloaded immigration hearing system, to evaluate the children while they're still in custody. Some might merit asylum. And the judicial protocol would allow the U.S. to repatriate the vast majority to their home countries.

In other words: Ensure children are safe and comfortable, create a fair adjudication system and then promptly rule.

That's the only way to convince Latino parents there is no point to putting their children in the hands of smugglers.

No small act for civil rights San Antonio Express-News

In 1964, with a stroke of a pen, President Lyndon B. Johnson did what should have been done long before: He did the right thing.

After two months of debate, including filibusters by Southern senators, Johnson on July 2 signed the legislation — legislation that is viewed, 50 years later, as the crowning achievement of the civil rights movement.

The bill, proposed by President John F. Kennedy, ended segregation in public places and banned discrimination in workplaces. It may have seemed tiny, that stroke of a pen, but it was preceded by equal measures of hatred and heroism, the heroism a direct result of the hatred. Men and women bled and died for the freedom that should have been a birthright.

Martin Luther King Jr., who would be assassinated four years later, led the fight, but he was joined by thousands of others throughout the nation, black and white, men and women, young and old. ...

Slavery, along with the genocide of the American Indian, is the gravest sin as a nation, but the abuse and terror did not stop when President Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves in 1865.

It continued with the beating and lynching of black Americans, sometimes by the Ku Klux Klan, sometimes by freelancing thugs, scoundrels with no association to the terrorist groups. And it continued with segregation in schools, on buses, even in churches, where God is colorblind.

We are a flawed country, but flawed countries recognize their imperfections, and they strive, sometimes against great odds, to correct the evil perpetrated on their own citizens. Nothing can undo the horror of slavery. And it continued the surface in its aftermath. But the Civil Rights Act built a significant fortress around minorities who had come to fear for their safety — and even their lives — thus assuring that some wrongs of the past would remain in the past. ...

The battle is not over. Not when politicians continue to undermine our districts to dilute minority voting. Not when courts continue to neuter the Voting Rights Act. Not when attempts to diversify universities and workplaces are seen as nothing more than quotas.

Make no mistake, however. With the Civil Rights Act of 1964, we took a hugely important step toward true freedom and equality. The bill made us a better nation.

NBA



BILLY SMITH II, HOUSTON CHRONICLE/AP

Houston Rockets fan Frank Vasquez takes a photograph of free agent forward Carmelo Anthony wearing Rockets jerseys in composite images on the Toyota Center marquee Wednesday in Houston. Anthony visited the Rockets on Wednesday.

Carmelo visits Rockets

By KRISTIE RIEKEN
The Associated Press

Free agents

r-restricted, all others unrestricted

HOUSTON — Prized free agent Carmelo Anthony visited Houston on Wednesday and was greeted with images of him in two Rockets uniforms.

A day after visiting the Chicago Bulls, the New York Knicks' star continued his tour in Houston. A video board outside the Toyota Center depicted one image of Anthony in Houston's white uniform with red lettering and another in a retro red and yellow uniform. Between the pictures was Anthony's logo with the word 'Melo' in it. He was wearing his No. 7 in both renderings, despite the fact that current Rocket Jeremy Lin wears that number. The Rockets would likely have to unload the point guard to snag Anthony.

Lin responded to the snub on Twitter on Wednesday afternoon with a bible verse. He tweeted the verse Luke 6:29: "If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them."

Houston got the biggest prize in free agency last offseason when it signed Dwight Howard away from the Lakers, with designs on making a deep run in the playoffs this year. But the Rockets were bounced from the postseason in the first round just as they were the year before. So they started looking to upgrade the roster.

They made the first move to free up money for adding players by agreeing to a trade that will send center Omer Asik and

ATLANTA — Gustavo Ayon, Elton Brand, r-Shelvin Mack, Carter Martin, r-Mike Scott
BOSTON — Joel Anthony, Jerryl Bayless, r-Avery Bradley, Kris Humphries
BROOKLYN — Alan Anderson, Andrew Blatche, Jason Collins, Andre Kirilenko, Shaun Livingston, Paul Pierce

CHARLOTTE — Chris Douglas-Roberts, Ben Gordon, Josh McRoberts, Jannero Pargo, Luke Ridnour, Anthony Tolliver, D.J. White

CHICAGO — D.J. Augustin, Jimmer Fredette, Kirk Hinrich, Naar Mohammed

CLEVELAND — Luol Deng, Spencer Hawes, C.J. Miles

DALLAS — Deluan Blair, Vince Carter, r-Jae Crowder, Devin Harris, Bernard James, Shawn Marion, Dirk Nowitzki

DENVER — Darrell Arthur, Aaron Brooks, Nate Robinson, Jan Vesely

DETROIT — Chauncey Billups, Jonas Jerebko, r-Greg Monroe, Rodney Stuckey, Charlie Villanueva

GOLDEN STATE — Steve Blake, Jordan Crawford, Jermaine O'Neal

HOUSTON — r-Troy Daniels, Francisco Garcia, Jordan Hamilton, r-Chandler Parsons

INDIANA — Lavoy Allen, Rasual Butler, Andrew Byrum, Lance Stephenson, Evan Turner

L.A. CLIPPERS — Darren Collison, Glen Davis, Danny Granger, Willie Green, Ryan Hollings, Hedo Turkoglu

L.A. LAKERS — Kent Bazemore, MarShon Brooks, Jordan Farmer, Pau Gasol, Xavier Henry, Jordan Hill, Wesley Johnson, Chris Kaman, r-Ryan Kelly, Jodie Meeks, Nick Young

MEMPHIS — Ed Davis, James Johnson, Mike Miller, Zach Randolph, Beno Udrih

SOURCE: nba.com

cash considerations to New Orleans for a protected future first-round draft pick.

Lin is set to make more than \$8 million next season in the final year of a three-year contract. That's a steep price for a backup after he was relegated to the bench last season because of solid play by Patrick Beverley and started just 33 games.

The 30-year-old Anthony would add an-

MIAMI — Ray Allen, Chris Anderson, Shane Battier, Michael Beasley, Chris Bosh, Mario Chalmers, Toney Douglas, Idonis Haslem, LeBron James, James Jones, Rashard Lewis, Greg Oden, Dwyane Wade

MILWAUKEE — Jeff Adrien, Ramon Sessions, Ekpe Udoh

MINNESOTA — Dante Cunningham, Robbie Hummel, Othys Jefferson

NEW ORLEANS — Al-Farouq Aminu, Darius Miller, Anthony Morrow, Brian Roberts, Jason Smith, James Southerland

NEW YORK — Cole Aldrich, Carmelo Anthony, Andrea Bargnani, Kenyon Martin, Toure Murry, Amar'e Stoudemire, Metta World Peace

OKLAHOMA CITY — Caron Butler, Derek Fisher, r-Grant Jerrett, Thabo Sefolosha

ORLANDO — Doron Lamb, E'Twaun Moore, Jameel Nelson

PHILADELPHIA — James Anderson, Byron Mullens, Jason Richardson, Adonis Thomas

PHOENIX — Leandro Barbosa, r-Eric Bledsoe, Channing Frye, Emeka Okafor, r-P.J. Tucker

PORTLAND — Earl Watson, Mo Williams

SACRAMENTO — Jared Cunningham, Rudy Gay, Aaron Gray, r-Isiah Thomas

SAN ANTONIO — r-Aron Baynes, Matt Bonner, Boris Diaw, Tim Duncan, Damian Jones, Patty Mills

TORONTO — Kyle Lowry, r-Nando de Colo, r-Patrick Patterson, r-Greivis Vasquez

UTAH — r-Gordon Hayward, Richard Jefferson, Brandon Rush, Marvin Williams

WASHINGTON — Trevor Ariza, r-Trevor Booker, Drew Gooden, Marcin Gortat, Al Harrington, r-Kevin Seraphin, Chris Singleton, Garrett Temple

other proven scorer to a team that features Howard and James Harden. Anthony averaged 25.2 points last season with the Knicks, which was second in the NBA to Oklahoma City's Kevin Durant. Harden was fifth in the league with a 24.3 average.

Anthony is expected to meet with the Dallas Mavericks and the Los Angeles Lakers before sitting down with the Knicks.

Lowry staying with Raptors

TORONTO — Kyle Lowry is staying with the Toronto Raptors after leading them to the Atlantic Division title.

The point guard has agreed to re-sign with the Raptors, his agent confirmed Wednesday night. Yahoo Sports reported that the deal was for four years and \$48 million.

Lowry averaged career highs of 17.9 points and 7.4 assists for the Raptors, who were one of the NBA's biggest surprises in going 48-34. They were expected to be one of the league's worst teams, particularly after trading forward Rudy Gay early in the season, but instead nearly reached the Eastern Conference semifinals before falling to Brooklyn in seven games.

They were led by their guard tandem of Lowry and All-Star DeMar DeRozan, who will be staying together.

Lowry posted a picture of himself on Twitter in a Raptors jersey, writing that Toronto would be his home city.

He was considered the top point guard available and reportedly targeted by contending teams such as Miami and Houston during before deciding to stay put.

Contracts can't be signed until July 10.

Lowry has also played for Memphis and Houston, which traded him to Toronto in 2012. The 2006 first-round pick by the Grizzlies out of Villanova has career averages of 11.7 points and 5.4 assists.

Hollins to be new Nets coach

NEW YORK — The Brooklyn Nets reached an agreement in principle Wednesday with Lionel Hollins to become their coach, moving quickly after the departure of Jason Kidd.

The deal with the former Memphis Grizzlies coach comes two days after the Nets made a trade with the Milwaukee Bucks to allow Kidd out of his contract so the Bucks could hire him.

Nets general manager Billy King and his assistants then met with Hollins on Monday night and again Tuesday before agreeing to the deal. Terms were not disclosed. "I want to thank the Nets ownership and Billy for this opportunity," Hollins said in a statement. "It has been a long process to get back into the league, and I believe that Billy and I will have a very successful working relationship. Brooklyn has firmly established itself as a franchise that is committed to winning, and I eagerly look forward to becoming part of that culture and building on the success of the past two playoff appearances."

The Nets will introduce Hollins at a press conference Monday.

Hollins led Memphis to 56 victories and the 2013 Western Conference finals before he and the Grizzlies parted ways. The Nets considered him last year after firing P.J. Carlesimo before hiring Kidd.

He was the only known candidate the Nets interviewed this time. King said he had reached out to one other person who chose not to pursue the job.

Hollins is known as a strong defensive coach, with the Grizzlies holding opponents to an NBA-low 92.3 points per game in his final season. He is the franchise's career leader in wins and led them to three straight playoff appearances.

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American League										Wednesday										Tigers R, Athletics 3										Padres 3, Reds 0									
East Division					Royals 4, Twins 0					Arizona					Oakland					Detroit					Cincinnati					San Diego									
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National League					H P H R ER BS SO					Blue Jays 7, Brewers 4					Oakland					Detroit					Cincinnati					San Diego									
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Atlanta	47	38	553	1	Kansas City	020	000	011-4		Milwaukee	000	000	000-0		Reweks dh	4	1	1	0	0	Reyes ss	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0									
Washington	46	38	548	1	Minnesota	000	000	000-0		Braun rf	4	1	2	2	0	0	0			McCarthy 1b	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0										
Miami	41	43	548	5	Los Angeles	011	000	000-3		Quisenberry	6	5	1	0	1	3	5			Lowrey ss	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
Philadelphia	36	48	425	10	San Francisco City 1	011	000	000-3		Gonzalez cf	4	1	1	0	0	0	0			Lowrey ss	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
Central Division					HBP-BP (Correia) (S.Perez), T-3000.					Totals 33 4 7 4					Totals 100 000-0					Totals 34 9 13 3					Totals 34 9 13 3														
Milwaukee	51	23	567	3	HBP-BP (Correia) (S.Perez), T-3000.	020	000	011-4		Milwaukee	000	000	000-0		Reweks dh	4	1	1	0	0	Reyes ss	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0									
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Pittsburgh	44	40	524	6	Los Angeles	011	000	000-3		Quisenberry	6	5	1	0	1	3	5			Lowrey ss	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
Cincinnati	43	41	512	7	New York	000	000	000-0		Gonzalez cf	4	1	1	0	0	0	0			Lowrey ss	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
Chicago	37	46	446	12	Atlanta	000	000	000-0		Wattson H-21	3	0	0	0	0	0	0			Lowrey ss	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
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Los Angeles	48	37	552	1	Atlanta	000	000	000-0		Braun rf	4	1	2	2	0	0	0			McCarthy 1b	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0										
San Diego	46	38	547	3	Los Angeles	011	000	000-3		Quisenberry	6	5	1	0	1	3	5			Lowrey ss	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
Colorado	36	49	424	11	San Francisco City 1	011	000	000-3		Gonzalez cf	4	1	1	0	0	0	0			Lowrey ss	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
Arizona	35	47	407	13	10, J.D. Johnson 6, 2B-Escobar 24, 1b-Lacy 10, 1B-Holmes 4, 2B-Holmes 3, SS-Holmes 3, 1B-Johnson 3, 1B-Fuld 8.	011	000	000-3		Wattson H-21	3	0	0	0	0	0	0			Lowrey ss	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
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Tampa Bay 5, N.Y. Yankees 1					HBP-BP (Correia) (S.Perez), T-3000.					Totals 33 4 7 4					Totals 100 000-0					Totals 34 9 13 3					Totals 34 9 13 3														
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St. Louis 2, Houston 2					HBP-BP (Correia) (S.Perez), T-3000.					Totals 33 4 7 4					Totals 100 000-0					Totals 34 9 13 3					Totals 34 9 13 3														
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MLB

NL roundup

Polanco, Pirates get past D-Backs

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The first slump of Gregory Polanco's major league career didn't last long. Polanco hit a two-run homer and reached base three times as the Pittsburgh Pirates won for the fifth time in six games, 5-1 over the Arizona Diamondbacks on Wednesday night.

The 22-year-old phenom entered his fourth week in the majors without a hit in 12 at-bats over his previous three starts, dropping his average 50 points to .288. But a night after singling in his first pinch-hit at bat, Polanco doubled, walked and hit his third home run.

"This game is all about adjustments," Polanco said. "You have to adjust quick. The faster you adjust, the better you do."

Charlie Morton continued his effective pitching at home for Pittsburgh, which clinched its fourth consecutive series victory.

Morton (5-9) limited Arizona to one run, five hits and three walks in six innings to lower his ERA at PNC Park to 2.13.

Pittsburgh (44-40) has won nine of its past 11 games.

"We had a bad April. We dug a hole," Pirates manager Clint Hurdle said. "We've been digging out. That's all we're doing right now, is digging out."

Polanco has taken the opposite approach, reaching safely in 19 of 21 major league games. His line-drive shot to right off Chase Anderson in the second inning gave the Pirates a 3-0 lead.

"It's fun to watch him," Hurdle said. "He's got skills and he pays attention. The league has adjusted to him to some degree already and now he's starting to fire back a little bit."

Paul Goldschmidt went 3-for-4 with a run for the Diamondbacks, who have lost three straight.

"We made some mistakes to-night, and it came back to haunt us," Goldschmidt said. "That's

uncharacteristic of this team and these guys; we take a lot of pride on our defense. Tonight we didn't get it done."

The Pirates' Andrew McCutchen, who earlier in the day was named NL player of the month for June, did not play the field in the ninth inning. He fouled a ball off his left foot and winced in pain in the eighth, but continued his at-bat and singled.

Nationals 4, Rockies 3: After a replay review, Ian Desmond's solo homer provided the go-ahead run for host Washington and the victory that finished off a three-game sweep of Colorado. Jayson Werth also homered for the Nationals, who have won five straight.

Padres 3, Reds 0: Tyson Ross threw a three-hitter for his first career shutout and Rene Rivera hit a three-run single off big league ERA leader Johnny Cueto to give host San Diego its first three-game sweep since September.

Braves 3, Mets 1: Chris Johnson hit a three-run double and Julio Teheran pitched seven strong innings as host Atlanta polished off New York for a three-game sweep, extending its season-best winning streak to seven games.

Marlins 5, Phillies 0: Casey McGehee reached base three times, doubled in a run and scored another as host Miami sent Philadelphia to its sixth straight loss.

Cardinals 2, Giants 0: Adam Wainwright allowed four hits over 7½ innings and Matt Carpenter continued to feast on San Francisco pitching with three hits as visiting St. Louis ended its scoring drought.

Interleague

Indians 5, Dodgers 4: Mike Aviles capped a three-run eighth inning with a two-run single against Brian Wilson, rallying visiting Cleveland past Los Angeles. Ryan Raburn homered off Hyun-Jin Ryu, who was lifted after seven with a 3-2 lead.



GENE J. PUSKAS/AP

Pittsburgh's Gregory Polanco hits a two-run homer off Arizona pitcher Chase Anderson during the second inning of the Pirates' 5-1 win over the Diamondbacks on Monday in Pittsburgh.



CHRIS YOUNG, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

The Blue Jays' Munenori Kawasaki, right, forces out Milwaukee's Ryan Braun at second base as Jose Reyes looks on during the eighth inning of Wednesday's game in Toronto.

AL roundup

Encarnacion's walk-off HR lifts Blue Jays past Brewers

The Associated Press

TORONTO — In a short matter of time, Edwin Encarnacion came up with a fitting rhyme.

"He hanged it, I banged it," Encarnacion said after hitting a three-run homer with two outs in the ninth inning that lifted the Toronto Blue Jays over the Milwaukee Brewers 7-4 Wednesday.

Encarnacion launched a slider from Brandon Kintzler into the second deck for his 26th home run.

Jose Bautista and Juan Francisco also connected for the Blue Jays, who have hit a big league-high 113 homers this season.

It was 4-all when Jose Reyes led off the ninth with a double against Will Smith (1-1). Melky Cabrera was intentionally walked and Kintzler came on to face Anthony Gose, who failed to advance the runners with a bunt as Reyes was forced at third.

Darin Mastroianni struck out, but Encarnacion ended it with his 26th home run.

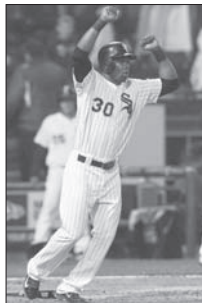
Encarnacion called his homer "the best moment you can have for any player." The game-ending shot tied him for the major league lead with White Sox rookie Jose Baez and Baltimore's Nelson Cruz.

Kintzler fell behind Encarnacion 3-1 before the drive.

"I should have just bounced a sinker and walked him or thrown the slider away off the plate," Kintzler said. "It definitely didn't go where I planned it."

Casey Janssen (3-0) worked one inning for the win.

The Brewers lost their third straight and were swept in the



NAM Y. HUN/AP

Chicago's Alejandro de Aza (30) celebrates after scoring on the game-winning single by Leury Garcia in the ninth inning of the White Sox's 3-2 win over the Los Angeles Angels on Wednesday in Chicago.

two-game series between division leaders, the first time this season they've been swept in a series of any length.

"We had good games with them, they're a good team," Kintzler said. "First place against first place."

With Bautista starting at designated hitter for the second straight game and Adam Lind at first base, Cabrera moved to right field and Encarnacion made his fourth career appearance in left. Bautista, who has been bothered by a strained left hamstring, hopes to

return to the outfield Thursday.

Rays 6, Yankees 3: Sean Rodriguez hit a tiebreaking homer in the sixth inning and drove in three runs, helping streaking Tampa Bay extend their longest winning string this year to five and hand host New York its season-worst fifth straight loss.

Mariners 5, Astros 2: Logan Morrison drove in two runs in a big sixth inning and Chris Young pitched seven strong innings as visiting Seattle completed a three-game sweep of Houston.

Tigers 9, Athletics 3: Torii Hunter hit three RBI singles and capped a six-run burst in the sixth inning that propelled host Detroit to finish a three-game sweep of Oakland.

White Sox 3, Angels 2: Leury Garcia drove in the winning run with a pinch-hit single off Michael Morin in the ninth inning to lift host Chicago over Los Angeles.

Royals 4, Twins 0: Jason Vargas threw seven scoreless innings and Raul Ibanez homered in his second game for visiting Kansas City in the win over Minnesota.

Orioles 6, Rangers 4: Adam Jones and Ryan Flaherty hit solo homers as host Baltimore beat Texas for the third straight game.

Interleague

Cubs 16, Red Sox 0: Justin Ruggiano had five RBIs and Mike Ott and Wellington Castillo hit two-run homers to power visiting Chicago in the finale of a three-game sweep over Boston. Red Sox DH David Ortiz became the 36th player in major league history to collect 1,000 extra-base hits with a ground-rule double.

WIMBLEDON/SPORTS BRIEFS



PAVEL GOLOVNIK/AP

Eugenie Bouchard celebrates a point against Simona Halep during their Wimbledon semifinal match Thursday at the All England Lawn Tennis Championships in London. Bouchard won 7-6 (5), 6-2.

Bouchard, Kvitova in final

By DENNIS PASSA
The Associated Press

LONDON — Eugenie Bouchard defeated French Open runner-up Simona Halep 7-6 (5), 6-2 Thursday to advance to the Wimbledon final against 2011 champion Petra Kvitova.

The 20-year-old Bouchard, who has not dropped a set in six matches, won on her sixth match point to reach her first Grand Slam final. She lost in the semifinals at this year's two previous majors, the Australian Open and French Open.

The first Canadian woman to reach Wimbledon's semifinals, Bouchard is the youngest player ranked in the top 20 — and will move into the top 10, at least to No. 8, on Monday, regardless of how she does in Saturday's final.

"I've put in a lot of hard work and it's been kind of years in the making to me," Bouchard said. "So I believe in myself and I expect good results. I've had a good start to the season, but I expect myself to do even better than that."

In a semifinal that was delayed twice in the first set — first by a left ankle injury to Halep, and then when a woman spectator fell ill during the tiebreaker — Halep double-faulted on break point in

the second set and then was broken again by Bouchard to give the Canadian a 4-1 lead.

Earlier, Kvitova beat fellow Czech left-hander Lucie Safarova 7-6 (6), 6-1.

No. 3-seeded Halep, who saved three match points in the seventh game and two more in the final game, appeared to be increasingly affected by her ankle injury and looked down at her feet several times after hitting shots.

"It was difficult to continue ... I felt a big pain in the moment, but then was better with the tape," Halep said. "But, still, I couldn't push anymore with my leg. My first serve was really bad after that."

On Bouchard's first match point, Halep hit an ace, but Bouchard did not appear ready to receive, and she went to speak with chair umpire Kader Nouni. But the point stood and Bouchard failed to clinch the match.

"It was a little crazy," Bouchard said. "I've never really kind of ended a match like that. Just happy I kept my focus and didn't get distracted or anything, and played well in the last game."

Kvitova beat Bouchard in their only meeting on hard courts.

"I find her as a very solid and talented player," Kvitova said.

Scoreboard

Thursday	
At The All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club	
London	
Purse: \$42.5 million (Grand Slam)	
Surface: Grass-Outdoor	
Singles	
Men	
Petra Kvitova (6), Czech Republic, def. Lucie Safarova (23), Czech Republic, 7-6 (5), 6-1.	
Eugenie Bouchard (13), Canada, def. Simona Halep (3), Romania, 7-6 (5), 6-2.	
Doubles	
Men	
Leander Paes, India, and Radek Stepanek (5), Czech Republic, def. Daniel Nestor, Canada, and Nenad Zimonjic (3), Serbia, 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-3, 6-4.	
Vasek Pospisil, Canada, and Jack Sock, United States, def. Alexander Peya, Austria, and Bruno Soares (2), Brazil, 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-4.	
Women	
Singles	
Sara Errani and Roberta Vinci (2), Italy, def. Ashleigh Barty and Casey Dellacqua (6), Australia, 6-4, 2-6, 6-0.	
Timea Babos, Hungary, and Kristina Mladenovic (14), France, def. Alla Kudryavtseva, Russia, and Anastasia Rodionova (11), Australia, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4.	
Doubles	
"She is confident in her game right now. She's moving very well ... she's playing aggressively."	
The men's semifinals are scheduled for Friday, with top-seeded Novak Djokovic playing Grigor Dimitrov, and seven-time champion Roger Federer taking on Canada's Milos Raonic.	

Briefly

Olympian, POW Zamperini dies

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Louis Zamperini, an Olympic distance runner and World War II veteran who survived 47 days on a raft in the Pacific after his bomber crashed, then endured two years in Japanese prison camps, has died. He was 97.



Zamperini

Zamperini's death was confirmed by Universal Pictures studio spokesman Michael Moses. A family statement released Thursday said Zamperini had been suffering from pneumonia.

Zamperini is the subject of Laura Hillenbrand's best-selling book "Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption," which is being made into a movie directed by Angelina Jolie and is scheduled for a December release by Universal.

"After a 40-day long battle for his life, he peacefully passed away in the presence of his entire family, leaving behind a legacy that has touched so many lives," the family statement said. "His indomitable courage and fighting spirit were never more apparent than in these last days."

A University of Southern California track star, Zamperini competed in the 5,000-meter run at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. He finished eighth but caught attention by running the final lap in 56 seconds.

In World War II, he was a bombardier on a U.S. Army Air Forces bomber that crashed in the Pacific Ocean during a reconnaissance mission. He and one of the other surviving crew members drifted for 47 days on a raft in shark-infested waters before being captured by Japanese forces. He spent more than two years as a prisoner of war, surviving torture.

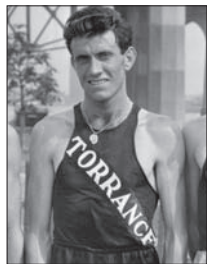
In May, Zamperini was named grand marshal of the 2015 Rose Parade in Pasadena, Calif., which next New Year's Day will feature the theme "Inspiring Stories."

In accepting the honor, Zamperini recalled that Hillenbrand, in researching the book, asked to interview his friends from college and the Army.

"And now after the book was finished all of my college buddies are dead, all of my war buddies are dead. It's sad to realize that you've lost all your friends," he said. "But I think I made up for it. I made a new friend — Angelina Jolie. And the gal really loves me, she hugs me and kisses me, so I can't complain."

NHL free-agency deals slow on second day

The New York Islanders made



AP file photo

Louis Zamperini represented the U.S. in the 1936 Olympic Games in the 5,000 meter race. Zamperini, a World War II veteran who survived 47 days on a raft in the Pacific after his bomber crashed, then endured two years in Japanese prison camps, died Wednesday. He was 97.

the biggest splash on Day 2 of the NHL free agency period by signing forwards Mikhail Grabovski and Nikolai Kulemin to four-year contracts. Grabovski's deal is worth \$20 million, while Kulemin will make \$16.75 million.

The Nashville Predators, who fell in a bid to land center Jason Spezza in a trade with Ottawa, made an addition by signing veteran center Olli Jokinen to a one-year, \$2.5 million deal.

The Vancouver Canucks signed right wing Radim Vrbata to a two-year, \$10 million deal. The 33-year-old Vrbata had 20 goals and 31 assists in 80 games last season for Arizona.

Forward Chris Bourque is back in the NHL after agreeing to a deal with the New York Rangers.

Army coach Monken welcomes frosh class

WEST POINT, N.Y. — First-year Army coach Jeff Monken has welcomed the freshman class to the West Point campus.

Hired in December to replace the fired Rich Ellerson, Monken greeted 60 newcomers from 21 states, including 44 on offense, 11 on defense and five special teams players. They began summer military training on Wednesday.

Monken guided Army through spring drills and will have the entire team together in early August to continue preparations for the season.

Monken says service-academy recruiting is tough because coaches are scrambling and hoping their evaluations are right.

Ellerson went 20-41 in five seasons at Army and never beat archrival Navy.

Army opens the season on Sept. 6 at Michie Stadium against Buffalo.

WORLD CUP

Ready: Players desperate to join world's elite

FROM BACK PAGE

While buoyed by the increase in attention, players are desperate to join the world's elite and far from attaining that level.

Klinsmann was a World Cup champion as a player with West Germany in 1990 and coach of the German team that reached the 2006 semifinals. Having moved to California in 1998 with his American wife, he is seen as bringing the perspective of soccer's elite to a nation that remains a new world in the sport.

His message to players is they don't need to be perfect. "It makes them feel accountable, not just walk away with a bad performance and nothing happens," he said. "If you have a bad performance, then people should approach you and tell you that, so make sure that next game is not bad anymore and that you step it up."



Klinsmann

President Barack Obama spoke to captain Clint Dempsey and goalkeeper Tim Howard on Wednesday to congratulate the team on its performance. Obama "commended them not only for their work on the field, but for carrying themselves in a way that made the country proud," the White House said in a statement.

Late Wednesday at the airport, Dempsey, forward Jozy Altidore and defender DaMarcus Beasley were cheered and stopped for autographs and photos before they boarded an American Airlines flight to Miami.

"People now start to care about it. Fans care about it. They comment on social media. They comment everywhere about it, and that's good," Klinsmann said.

His most controversial moves coming into the tournament were cutting Landon Donovan, the biggest star in U.S. soccer history, and taking along 18-year-old Julian Green, 20-year-old DeAndre Yedlin and 21-year-old John Brooks. Brooks and Green, who turned 19 on June 6, responded with late-game goals when they came in as substitutes, and Yedlin was stellar against Belgium when he replaced injured right back Fabian Johnson.

Klinsmann took over from Bob Bradley in July 2011. Last December, he was given a contract through the 2018 tournament, and added the title of U.S. Soccer Federation technical director. In the next four-year cycle, he has numerous chances to integrate youth: the CONCACAF Gold Cups in 2015 and 2017, the centennial Copa America in 2016 and a possible trip to the Confederations Cup in 2017.

He defended his pre-tournament comment that the U.S. was not ready to win the World Cup, saying he didn't want to raise "expectations to kind of a level that is over the moon." After he arrived in Brazil, he mentioned he was prepared to stay for the entire tournament, that he had booked a plane ticket for the day after the final just in case.

But as U.S. players prepared to scatter to clubs and family vacations, Klinsmann conceded he also was leaving early. "I changed the ticket last night," he said.



TIMBIA HADEBE/AP

United States' goalkeeper Tim Howard gestures to his teammates after making a save against Belgium at the Arena Fonte Nova in Salvador, Brazil, on Tuesday.

GK Howard's play highlight of US run 16-save performance leaves lasting impression on fans

By JANIE McCAULEY

The Associated Press

SAO PAULO — Tim Howard left a lasting impression on Americans from coast to coast — and fans around the world, really — for his incredible, improbable saves in the loss to Belgium in extra time that sent the U.S. home from the World Cup to a country captivated.

Howard is a big reason — 6-foot-3, to be exact — for the fascination. He has become a Twitter sensation in less than a day, while raising one important question before he leaves Brazil: Will the 35-year-old goalkeeper be back for the next World Cup four years from now in Russia?

"When you're in the public eye, it's part of what you have to deal with," Howard said Wednesday of the hype from his record-setting World Cup. "I've been dealing with it for a long time. It's nice that America knows about soccer now. That's what's important."

Howard's 16 saves in the 2-1 loss were the most in a World Cup game since FIFA started tracking the statistic in 2002.

Someone had fun with Howard's heroics on Wikipedia, briefly listing the star goalie as incumbent "Secretary of Defense of the United States of America." Later, the real defense secretary, Chuck Hagel, called Howard with congratulations and a team invite to the Pentagon.

A photo from Howard's high school yearbook even began circulating, featuring the quote, "It will take a nation of millions to hold me back."

Even Belgium captain Vincent Kompany tweeted: "Two words. TIM HOWARD #Respect #BelUSA." That post

had received 59,675 re-tweets and 45,242 favorites by early evening Wednesday.

"It's fantastic because it also shows how all the games in the World Cup were received back at home," U.S. coach Jurgen Klinsmann said, "and many people watched this competition maybe more than it was four years ago in South Africa. It's fun to see that, and he deserves every compliment for his game last night."

The hashtag #ThingsTimHoward-CouldSave was trending on Twitter, and fans superimposed his image into all sorts of famous scenes. There's an outstretched Howard preventing the Titanic from sinking and breaking up Diego Maradona's "Hand of God" goal.

"With social media, nothing surprises me," Howard said. "There are some very creative and fun individuals out there."

The team was scheduled to fly back to the U.S. late Wednesday and Howard soon will return to his Premier League club, Everton.

Millions of Americans will be rooting for Howard to play in the 2018 World Cup. That's something Howard will discuss with those close to him.

"What happens going forward with the national team, I don't know," he said. "I don't think it's very black and white, to be honest. I need to figure all that out."

Howard had 15 shutouts — one behind co-leaders Petr Cech of Chelsea and Wojciech Szczesny of Arsenal — in 37 league matches for Everton this season before joining the Americans in mid-May for training camp in Northern California. In the spring, he signed a contract extension through 2018 and is likely to close out his career with Everton.

FIFA: 4th sub in extra time a possibility

By GRAHAM DUNBAR

The Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Substitutes have made a big impact at the World Cup, and there could be more of them in four years' time.

FIFA's coaching advisers will propose before the 2018 World Cup kicks off that teams can use a fourth substitute in extra time.

"I think that's an idea that we will put" to football's rules-making panel, Gerard Houllier, a member of the FIFA technical study group, said at a briefing on Wednesday.

Up to three replacements are currently allowed, even when knockout matches go to 30 extra minutes after scores are level in regulation time.

Houllier said changing the rules could see fewer players struggle with muscle problems in high-intensity matches.

"It's a good idea. Only in extra time. Maybe if someone is injured, why not?"

Gerard Houllier, FIFA technical study group

"It's a good idea. Only in extra time. Maybe if someone is injured, why not?" the former France coach said.

So far, substitutes have scored 29 goals after coming off the bench in Brazil, already a World Cup record with eight matches left to play. The previous mark was 23 at the 2006 tournament in Germany, FIFA said.

"Substitutes play such an important part because they come with a freshness and attitude," Houllier said. "Nearly a quarter of (all) the goals have been scored in the final 15 minutes of the game."

Those goals by subs have often been game-changing, rather than additional scores in blowout victories.

Klaas-Jan Huntelaar came on late when the Netherlands were losing 1-0 to Mexico in the round of 16 on Sunday. Huntelaar teed up Wesley Sneijders for an 88th-minute leveller and then scored the decisive stoppage-time penalty.

On Monday, Belgium could not beat inspired United States goalkeeper Tim Howard until substitute Romelu Lukaku was sent on in extra time and quickly set up Kevin De Bruyne for the equalizing goal, then scored the second in a 2-1 win.

The Americans also got a decisive late goal in its opening group match from defensive replacement John Brooks.

FIFA has asked Houllier's group to propose ideas to football's rules panel, which is known as IFAB.

By the numbers

29 23

Goals scored by substitutes coming off the bench at 2014 World Cup.

Previous World Cup record for goals scored by subs, set in 2006.

SOURCE: The Associated Press

WORLD CUP

Deschamps: Guts, goals win games

By JEROME PUGMIRE
The Associated Press

RIBEIRAO PRETO, Brazil — France coach Didier Deschamps has never lost a World Cup match, and his experience tells him that winning Friday's quarterfinal against Germany will come down to guts.

Deschamps captained France to its only World Cup title in 1998, when the side was unbeaten, and he was again captain two years later when it won the European Championship.

His first World Cup campaign as coach is also proving fruitful, with France winning three and drawing one of its four games so far, although Les Bleus needed late goals to beat Nigeria 2-0 in Monday's second-round match. France's group — containing Switzerland, Ecuador and Honduras — was not among the strongest in the competition and Germany will be the favorite at the Maracana.

"Football ability is one thing, but it's your mentality and what you have in your stomach that allows you to turn a situation around and get a result," Deschamps said on Tuesday.

"I hate (defeat) and I always will hate it. I always will hate it. The players need to feel that way and they do. It's not an exact science, but you need to dig deep inside of yourself, never give up and keep going."

France was in disarray at the last World Cup four years ago, where it went on strike and went out without winning a game. The team almost did not qualify for this tournament after losing 2-0 in the first leg of its playoff against Ukraine last November.

After that bitterly cold night in Kiev, few observers would have banked on France getting this far. But since then, it is unbeaten in nine games, has kept seven clean sheets and scored 28 goals.

"I'm very proud of what the team has done," Deschamps said. "We haven't failed our World Cup, that's for sure. But we're not going into Friday's match as tourists. If we go into it all relaxed then we'll get a shock."

France has won four of the past six friendly matches against Germany, with one draw and a 2-1 defeat the last time they played two years ago.

It's a different story at the World Cup, with Michel Platini's entertaining France side losing to the former West Germany in the semifinals in 1982 and 1986.

The defeat in '82 is arguably the most painful defeat in the history of French football, after France led 3-1 in extra time only to lose in a tense penalty shootout in Seville.

That match also saw a notorious incident when goalkeeper Harald Schumacher rushed off his line and smashed France defender Patrick Battiston full in the face as he ran through on goal. There was no attempt to get the ball, an unconscious Battiston went off on a stretcher and, astonishingly, Schumacher was not even shown a yellow card.

"My first souvenirs are of this '82 World Cup. It was a cruel ending but it was more than 30 years ago, so we're not going to start talking about revenge," the 45-year-old Deschamps said. "It was a big moment emotionally for those players, a sad one. But football has that magical quality of emotion."

Deschamps, however, will not use that match, or the 2-0 defeat in the semifinal four years later, to motivate his players.

"They weren't born then. I'm going to talk to them about what? If I talk to them about 2006, OK, but you have to live in your own era," Deschamps said.

"What's important is what happens on Friday."



KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/AP

Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, right, hits Algeria's Rafik Halliche in the face after clearing the ball Monday during their round of 16 match at the Estadio Beira-Rio in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Germany sees parallels with 1990 winning team

By NESHA STARCEVIC
The Associated Press

PORTO SEGURO, Brazil — Facing criticism at home for failing to find the beautiful game, Germany is drawing parallels to its 1990 World Cup campaign, when it won the last of its three titles.

Under coach Franz Beckenbauer in Italy, Germany got off to a rocket start, only to begin fading as the tournament grew long. But the Germans plodded through and beat Argentina 1-0 in the final in Rome to lift the title.

In this World Cup, Germany crushed Portugal 4-0 to open the tournament but is under fire from fans and media for a perceived lack of flair, especially after needing extra time to beat Algeria 2-1 and earn a ninth straight spot in the quarterfinals. Germany plays France on Friday in Rio de Janeiro.

Assistant coach Andreas Koepcke recalled Wednesday how the team labored to win the 1990 title.

"Of course, we discussed this match (against Algeria) later among us and we were not beating around the bush," Koepcke said Wednesday. "But you are going to have such matches in a tournament. Look at 1990 and



MATTHIAS SCHRADER/AP

Germany assistant Andreas Koepcke speaks to the media.

how it ended."

Germany kicked off its 1990 campaign with a 4-1 victory over then-highly touted Yugoslavia. It followed with a 5-1 demolition of the United Arab Emirates but settled for a 1-1 draw with Colombia in the final group match.

Germany then beat the Netherlands 2-1 in an ill-tempered match, and edged the Czech Republic 1-0 before needing penalties to defeat England in the semifinals following a 1-1 draw.

Here in Brazil, Germany had to come from behind to earn a 2-2 draw with Ghana in its second match, before edging the United States 1-0 and struggling mightily in the extra-time win over Algeria that exposed its wobbly defense, which produced a series of errors in a shaky display.

Germany had goalkeeper Manuel Neuer to thank for that win.

"We are not happy, either, with our performances, but at the end we've always come out as deserved winners. It's the winning that matters," Neuer said Wednesday, ahead of the team's departure for Rio de Janeiro.

Germany coach Joachim Loew sounded a similar note after the Algeria match.

"Should I now be disappointed that we are in the last eight?" he asked, rhetorically. "There are such games in every tournament when you need the willpower to advance. You don't have to play fantastic every match, you have to win."

Loew is under pressure to win his first title in his fourth major tournament. Germany was runner-up at the Euro 2008, a semifinalist at the 2010 World Cup and a semifinalist at the 2012 Euro, when his tactics in the loss to Italy were heavily criticized.

Germany is trying to avoid the role of favorite in the match against France.

"France has always had good individuals but they now play as (a) real team," Koepcke said.

Neuer added: "They are dangerous and flexible. They may not have played perfect games, but they are strong and steady."



MARTIN MEISSNER/AP

France head coach Didier Deschamps shouts at his team during Monday's round of 16 match against Nigeria at the Estadio Nacional in Brasilia, Brazil. France needed late goals to win the match 2-0.

WORLD CUP

Brazil faces upbeat Colombia in quarters

By TALES AZZONI
The Associated Press

TERESOPOLIS, Brazil — Brazil and Colombia enter the World Cup quarterfinals with totally different mindsets.

Brazil is surrounded by doubts after a more difficult start than expected to the tournament it is hosting. Colombia is upbeat after convincing performances and four straight wins.

While the hosts narrowly beat Chile in a penalty shootout to avoid elimination in the second round, the Colombians had a convincing 2-0 win over Uruguay to reach the quarterfinals for the first time.

The South American rivals play Friday in the northeastern city of Fortaleza, with Brazil hoping to keep alive its quest for a sixth World Cup title and Colombia aiming to extend its best ever run in football's showcase event.

Despite its tradition and home-field advantage, Brazil is far from a big favorite. An uncomfortable opening win over Croatia, a draw with Mexico and a win over Cameroon in the group stage preceded the tight knockout match against Chile, when Brazil advanced on penalties.

"It's normal to have people demanding that we play better," Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari said. "But it's also normal what we have been seeing in this World Cup so far. There were a lot of even matches. There is no difference between teams that have tradition and world titles and the rest of the teams. Matches are being decided on penalties, in the final minutes, on mistakes."



MARTIN MEISSNER/AP

Brazil's hopes of reaching the World Cup semifinals remain on the shoulders of Neymar, who has scored four goals and has been the team's most consistent offensive threat.



Brazil vs. Colombia
AFN-Sports
9:30 p.m. Friday CET
4:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

Colombia has won all of its matches without any real difficulty, thanks in part to the tournament's second-best attack with 11 goals, one less than the Netherlands.

"We're very happy because we

are making history," said Colombia midfielder James Rodriguez, the tournament's leading scorer with five goals. "We want to do even more because this is a team that really wants to win."

Colombia has beaten Brazil only twice — the last time in the 1991 Copa America — but the teams have drawn the last four matches they played, including in a 2012 friendly in New York.

Brazil has reached the quarterfinals in six consecutive World Cups, but was eliminated at this stage in the past two.

The host nation's hopes of going farther into the tournament this time remain on the shoulders of Neymar, who has scored four

goals and has been decisive for his team. The striker injured his right knee against Chile but team doctors said he will be fit to play at the Arena Castelao.

Colombia is relying mostly on Rodriguez, one of the stars of the World Cup so far.

"He has a lot of quality with his left foot, he's showing why Monaco paid a lot of money to sign him," Brazil defensive midfielder Fernandinho said. "We can't give him any space, we are going to have to be very careful with him."

Colombia coach Jose Pekerman has all of his players available, but Scolari will make changes due to the suspension of defensive midfielder Luiz Gustavo.

In Wednesday's training, Scolari hinted that midfielder Paulinho will be Gustavo's replacement.



Colombia's James Rodriguez is the leading scorer at the World Cup with five goals.

MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

France comfortable as underdog against Germany

By STEVE DOUGLAS
The Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — A European presence in the World Cup semifinals is assured as Germany and France meet at the Maracana on Friday, looking to shrug off stumbling wins in the second round that exposed frailties in both teams.

Contesting a quarterfinal for the ninth straight World Cup, the Germans will start as slight favorites because of their vast experience in major tournaments but with doubts surrounding a slow, porous defense that was breached repeatedly in the 2-1 extra-time victory over Argentina on Monday.

If goalkeeper Manuel Neuer hadn't produced the kind of sweeper display that German greats Franz Beckenbauer and Lothar Matthaus would have been proud of, Joachim Loew's side could have been on the end of a real shock.

The French also left it late in the last 16, scoring twice in the final 11 minutes to beat Nigeria 2-0 in a gritty performance that failed to match the swashbuckling attack-



Germany vs. France
AFN-Xtra
5:30 p.m. Friday CET
12:30 a.m. Saturday JKT

ing exhibitions they put on in the group stage.

France was thrust among the tournament favorites after scoring a combined eight goals against Switzerland and Honduras. Yet, Didier Deschamps' inexperienced team played within themselves against Nigeria, perhaps struggling under the weight of lofty expectations.

Deschamps counts France as the underdog.

"Don't forget that in the last two competitions, Germany have reached the semifinals so it counts for something," he said, referring to the 2010 World Cup and the European Championship in 2012.



DAVID VINCENT/AP

France's Mathieu Valbuena celebrates after its 2-1 World Cup Round of 16 win over Nigeria in Brasilia, Brazil.

"They're used to playing at the highest level and have experience of playing at this stage of a competition. All of the German players play in big clubs, a lot of them play for Bayern Munich."

Still, after starting up in Brazil with a 4-0 victory over Portugal, Germany's displays have been far from convincing. Nerves are be-

ginning to show and Loew — under pressure to finally win a title in his fourth major tournament — has been on the defensive.

"Should I now be disappointed that we are in the last eight?" he asked, rhetorically, on Tuesday. "There are such games in every tournament when you need the will power to advance."

Defense undoubtedly is Loew's chief concern, although the probable return of Mats Hummels at center back after illness will make up for the loss of Shkodran Mustafi for the rest of the tournament with a left hamstring injury.

There may also be a change in the center of France's defense, with Mamadou Sakho available again after a hamstring problem that caused him to miss the Nigeria game. However, Laurent Koscielny had a good display as the replacement, helping the French to a third clean sheet in four games in Brazil, and would be unlikely to lose his place.

As part of a revamped squad under Deschamps, the likes of Paul Pogba, Raphael Varane and Antoine Griezmann are playing at their first major tournament and being exposed to football's highest stage for the first time. The coach, though, remains unperturbed.

The quarterfinal in Rio de Janeiro offers another chance for veteran Germany striker Miroslav Klose to break the World Cup scoring record of 15 goals that he currently shares with Brazil great Ronaldo.

SPORTS



Rockets' man?

Carmelo meets with Houston in latest stop on free agency tour | **Page 25**

WORLD CUP



JULIO CORTES/AP

Jurgen Klinsmann addresses the media on Wednesday after the U.S. was eliminated from the 2014 World Cup in a 2-1 loss to Belgium in Salvador, Brazil, on Tuesday.

Not ready... yet

Klinsmann: Much work still ahead for US national team

By RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

SAO PAULO

Turns out Jurgen Klinsmann was right: The United States isn't ready to win the World Cup.

The Americans were eliminated in the round of 16 for the second straight tournament. They've been ranked 13th or 14th every month since Sep-

tember, which means their exit was pretty much at the stage it's expected to be.

"Clearly it gives you the message you have a lot of work still ahead of you," the U.S. coach said Wednesday, a day after the 2-1 loss to Belgium in extra time.

From Wall Street to the White House to the West Coast, Americans watched their national team on television in record numbers.

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'People now start to care about it. Fans care about it. They comment on social media. They comment everywhere about it, and that's good.'

Jurgen Klinsmann

U.S. head coach; U.S. Soccer Federation technical director

Encarnacion lifts homer-happy Blue Jays over Brewers | **MLB roundups, Page 27**

Former champ Kvitova advances to final | **Wimbledon, Page 28**

